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**LIFE AND LETTERS**  
**OF**  
**SIR WILFRID LAURIER**  
**VOLUME I**







WILFRID LAURIER  
At twenty-eight

LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
SIR WILFRID LAURIER

BY  
OSCAR DOUGLAS SKELTON

ILLUSTRATED WITH  
PHOTOGRAPHS

VOLUME I

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TO  
MY MOTHER





## PREFACE

Some time before his death, Sir Wilfrid Laurier placed in my hands all his papers, covering the period to the close of his term of office. After his death, Lady Laurier gave access to the later papers. These papers included all the documents of public interest which he had accumulated, with the exception of a few boxes of letters lost in the burning of the Parliament Buildings during the war.

It will be noted that few letters have been reprinted in the early as compared with the late years of Sir Wilfrid's life. There is a striking difference in the character of the correspondence of the middle and of the last years. During his years of office, when business pressed and when men came across a continent at a prime minister's nod, the letters, though abundant, are nearly always brief and rarely of general interest. In the years of comparative leisure, when a leader in opposition had to go to men, or write them, and particularly when emotions were stirred, the letters are longer and freer. Sir Wilfrid's caution and his remarkable memory lessened the extent to which he committed himself on paper. He never wrote a letter when he could hold a conversation, and he never filed a document when he could store the fact in his memory: fortunately, his secretaries saw to the filing. So far as is known, he never wrote a line in a diary in his life. He was not given to introspection; he lived in his day's work.

The writer is deeply indebted to friends of Sir Wilfrid and of his own who have read these pages in proof.

## PREFACE

They are given to the public with the hope that they may provide his countrymen with the material for a fuller understanding of one who was not only a moving orator, a skilled parliamentarian, a courageous party leader, and a faithful servant of his country, but who was the finest and simplest gentleman, the noblest and most unselfish man, it has ever been my good fortune to know.

O. D. SKELTON.

*Kingston, Canada,  
October, 1921.*

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**LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR  
WILFRID LAURIER**





# LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER

## CHAPTER I

### THE MAKING OF A CANADIAN

The Peopling of New France—An Outpost of the Faith—A Soldier of France—The Laurier Stock—The Habitant—New France and British Policy—Charles Laurier, Inventor—Carolus and Marcelle Laurier—Birth of Wilfrid Laurier—Boyhood in St. Lin—An English Schooling—L'Assomption College—Student at Law—Early Partnerships—The Eastern Townships—A Happy Marriage.

**W**ILFRID LAURIER was born at St. Lin, a little village on the Laurentian plain north of Montreal, on November 20, 1841. Exactly two hundred years earlier his first Canadian ancestor had fared forth from Normandy, a member of the little band of pioneers who had undertaken to plant an outpost of France and the Faith on the Iroquois-harried island of Montreal. For eight generations his forefathers took their part in the unending task of subduing the Laurentian wilderness. Striking deep roots in Canadian soil, shaping and shaped by the new ways and new interests of the colony, they worked, like thousands of their compatriots, for the most part in obscurity and silence. Then at last the sound and sturdy stock

found expression. We cannot understand Wilfrid Laurier, his character, temperament, viewpoint, his problems, limitations, achievements, unless we bear in mind those two centuries of life and work in the Canada which had become his kinsmen's only home.

France had entered late into the race for overseas possessions. The wars of religion, entanglements in Europe, court intrigues, had occupied the whole interest of her rulers. When at last, in the seventeenth century, with a measure of unity attained at home, France had brief leisure to dream of New-World empire, there seemed little place left in the sun. Spaniards and Portuguese, English and Dutch, were staking out the lands of sun and gold. French adventurers found a footing in India and Florida and Brazil, but for the most part they followed the track of Breton fishermen to the fogs and furs of the St. Lawrence. In 1608, a year after the London Company had founded, in the marshes of Jamestown, the first enduring English settlement in the South, Champlain founded, on the rock of Quebec, the first enduring French settlement in the North. For all Champlain's courage and persistence, it grew but slowly. The weary and perilous voyage in crude and comfortless craft barred all but the most courageous or the most despairing. There was no gold to lure. The fur-trade was monopolized by the trading companies to which in turn kingly favour inclined. It was a task of years to clear an opening in the dense forests, and the little settlement planted in a vast fertile continent was long dependent for food and stores on the yearly ships from

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France. The Iroquois lurked at the gate. Winter and scurvy and brandy played havoc with men who would not learn the country's ways. If New France was to become more than a fur-trader's post, some other power was needed to drive or draw men forth.

That power was religion. In the English settlements to the south, it was religion more than any other factor that impelled men to leave the land of their birth and seek homes overseas. Men who could not find in England freedom to worship as their conscience dictated, or power to make others worship as they themselves pleased—Puritans, Quakers, Roman Catholics, and, in Long Parliament days, Episcopalians—formed the backbone of the settlements on the Atlantic coast, and gave the young colonies their fateful bias toward self-government.

In New France it was not the discontent of a religious minority that sent men and women overseas. This solution of France's colonizing problem had been definitely rejected. France, like England, had its dissenters: there were in Europe no more resolute or enterprising men, no better stuff for the building of a new state, than the Huguenots. But they were not allowed to find an outlet in America, under the flag of France. For years advisers of the court, lay and cleric, urged that New France should be saved from the evil of a divided faith which had brought old France to the verge of ruin, and that the simplest way to avoid conflict was to bar the Huguenot. Insistent pressure and the flaring out again of Huguenot revolt, brought Richelieu to yield, and in

the charter granted the Hundred Associates trading company, in 1627, all Huguenots and foreigners were forbidden to enter the colony. The discontented minority who might have emigrated to New France and who eventually were exiled from France to build up her rivals, were not allowed to grapple with the task. The contented majority for whom the colony was reserved had little wish to go.

Yet in another way than in the English colonies religion was destined to provide the impelling force. There were among the Catholics of France men and women of burning zeal, who felt a call to bring the Indians to Christ. While English settlers with their families were flocking to New England and Virginia, seeking to better themselves both here and hereafter, in New France martyr priests and devoted nuns were facing endless perils and privations in the hope of winning savage souls. There are no more glorious pages in the annals of missions than those which record the womanly tenderness and practical efficiency of Jeanne Mance and Marguerite Bourgeoys and Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, or the devotion of Franciscan and Jesuit fathers, Le Caron and Dablon, Lalemant and Brébeuf, Le Jeune and Massé and Jogues, following the shifting, shiftless Montagnais through filth and famine, labouring patient years in the great Huron villages of what is now western Ontario, or braving the Iroquois in their innermost strongholds, only too often crowning a life of service by martyrdom under the scalping-knife or at the stake.

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The reports or *Relations* in which each year the Jesuits recorded their efforts, fired the imagination of pious men and women throughout France. Not least they stirred one extraordinary group of men and women, in whom mystic piety, hard-headed grasp of practical affairs and unquestioning courage were strangely mingled, to a resolve to plant the Cross far toward the heart of the new land. Jérôme le Royer de la Dauversière, tax-gatherer of Anjou; Jean Jacques Olier, Paris abbé and later founder of the Order of St. Sulpice; Pierre Chevrier, Baron de Fancamp; Mme. de Bullion, as pious as she was rich; Mlle. Jeanne Mance, honoured of all Canadian nurses who have followed in her footsteps, and Paul de Chomedy, Sieur de Maisonneuve, Christian gentleman, whose simple faith had withstood contact with soldiers and with heretics, were only the more notable of the associates who thus came together to found the Society of Our Lady of Montreal. Their aim was to found a mission outpost on the island of Montreal, which lay at the junction of the two great Indian waterways, the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, and was famed through all North America as a rendezvous. Here priests were to minister to the spiritual needs of such savages as could be made to halt and heed; nursing sisters were to care for the sick and the aged, and teaching sisters to instruct the young. Funds were raised, a grant of the island secured, soldier colonists selected, and three small vessels equipped. In the summer of 1641 the expedition reached Quebec. Here they found little backing for their rash venture. Gov-

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ernor and Jesuit sought to dissuade them from inevitable and useless sacrifice; it was unwise to scatter forces when the whole white population of Canada was less than three hundred; the island of Montreal was straight in the track of the Iroquois hordes who every year swept up the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa in their relentless hunting of men. But Maisonneuve insisted that to Montreal he would go "if every tree on the island were to be changed to an Iroquois," and in the following spring the undaunted little band took possession.

Among the soldier colonists who followed Maisonneuve there was found Wilfrid Laurier's first known Canadian ancestor.<sup>1</sup> Augustin Hébert was a native of the Norman town of Caen, the birthplace of William the Conqueror. Four years after his coming he married a girl of twenty, Adrienne Du Vivier, daughter of Antoine Du Vivier and Catherine Journé, originally from Carbondale, in the province of Laon. Four children were born to them, Paule, Jeanne, Léger, and Ignace. Paule, who died in infancy, was sponsored by M. de Maisonneuve and Mlle. Mance. In August, 1651, Augustin Hébert died of wounds received in an engagement with the Iroquois. Three years later his widow

<sup>1</sup> List of the first colonists of Montreal, as given by M. l'Abbé Verreau, in "Trans. Royal Society of Canada," 1882, p. 99:

1642: May to August

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. M. de Maisonneuve    | 8. Jean Robelin             |
| 2. Le Père Poncet       | 9. <i>Augustin Hébert</i>   |
| 3. M. de Puiseau        | 10. Antoin Damiens          |
| 4. Mlle. Mance          | 11. Jean Caillot            |
| 5. Mme. de la Peltrie   | 12. Pierre Laimery          |
| 6. Mlle. Catherin Barré | 13. Nicolas Gode and family |
| 7. Jean Gorry           |                             |

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married Robert Le Cavelier. M. de Maisonneuve granted them forty arpents of land near the fort, on condition that the land might be resumed if needed for building, that Adrienne Du Vivier renounced her dowry and her rights in the estate of her first husband, and that they would undertake to bring up the three surviving children of Hébert until they attained their twelfth year.<sup>1</sup>

The vision of Indians flocking peaceably from all the St. Lawrence valley to hear the gospel message faded before the stern reality of Iroquois attack. The Five Nations had vowed to destroy the whole French colony, and particularly the outpost at Montreal. They were then at the height of their power. An unusual capacity for political organization, a shrewd mastery of diplomacy, a grasp of military strategy, a persistence as rare among Indians as their ruthlessness was common, and, not least, ample stores of firearms sold by recklessly profiteering Dutch traders from New Netherlands made the Iroquois the most formidable of all Indian peoples, unquestioned lords from Maine to the Mississippi and from Hudson Bay to Tennessee. Hurons, Neutrals, Eries, Andastes, in turn were exterminated. Only their French foes withstood them. For twenty-seven years (1640-67) the war continued, with only two brief breathing spells. Now great bands of warriors attacked in force; now single braves lurked for days in ambush to catch a Frenchman unawares. The builders of this New Jerusalem, as of the Jerusalem of old, worked in

<sup>1</sup> L'Abbé Dejordy: *La Famille Hébert-Lambert*, p. 1.

the fields with their weapons by their side. "Not a month of this summer passed," a chronicler recorded, "but the book of the dead was marked in letters of red by the hand of the Iroquois." Maisonneuve and his comrades fought hard, worked hard, prayed hard, and against all chance the little colony survived. Rarely had they strength to take the offensive. One breathing spell came when in 1660 Adam Dollard and his immortal sixteen young comrades, all but two in their twenties, after making their wills, their peace with their Maker, and their last farewells, struck up the Ottawa to meet the oncoming Iroquois, and at the Rapids of the Long Sault, Canada's more glorious Thermopylæ, fought for eight days and nights against seven hundred frantic foes, until arms, water, strength but never courage failed, and one by one the little band had fallen by musket or tomahawk or at the stake.

Exploits such as Dollard's checked the Iroquois, but only a great accession of force to the colonists could subdue them. Fortunately help was at hand. The rulers of France had at last both the will and the power to aid. The young king, Louis XIV, and his great minister, Colbert, were for the moment keenly alive to the possibilities of colonial strength. The Hundred Associates, the trading company which for a generation had misruled New France, lost its charter, and in 1663 the colony came virtually under the king's direct control. Jean Talon, intendant or business manager of the colony, came out to play Colbert's part on the smaller stage. Soldiers and settlers streamed in for a decade,



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and the Marquis de Tracy, at the head of large French and Canadian forces, laid waste the Iroquois country and brought peace for a score of years.

One of the soldiers in Tracy's crack force, the regiment of Carignan-Salières, raised by the Prince de Carignan in Savoy, tried and hardened in campaigns against the Turk, and brought to Canada under Sieur de Salières, was François Cottineau, *dit* Champlaurier, the first of the Laurier name in Canada. François Cottineau was born in 1641 at St.-Cloud, near Rochefoucauld, in what was then the province of Angoumois and is now the department of Charente, son, as the records say, of Jean Cottineau, vine-grower, and Jeanne Dupuy. In that day, when family names were still in the making, doubtless some ancestral field of *lauriers* or oleanders had given a sept of the Cottineaus the additional surname which in time was to become their only one.

The coming of Talon and Tracy assured the permanence of the colony. The little settlement on the island of Montreal shared in the brief outburst of vigour and support. Its religious purpose was not forgotten. Priests of the Order of St. Sulpice took spiritual charge and temporal lordship of the island, not without a bitter feud with the Jesuits which did not soon die. Mlle. Mance still gave to the Hotel Dieu her skill and judgment, and Marguerite Bourgeoys continued the work of teaching which the Congregation de Notre Dame has carried on to this day. But gradually the advantages of the island port for trade, and the rich farming possibilities of the volcanic island soil, led to growth in other

directions which soon overshadowed the original activities of the associates of Our Lady of Montreal. Montreal, like all New France, had ceased to be merely a fur-traders' counter and a missionaries' base of operations; it had become for all time a land of settlers and of homes.

For a few brief years the State took unwonted care to stimulate the growth of New France. Officers and men of the Carignan-Salières regiment were induced to settle, Roman-wise, on the imperilled borders, though it is to be feared that more of them turned *coureurs de bois*, roaming far in the Western wilderness, than remained to till the soil of the Richelieu seigniories. Ship after ship of settlers came, and thrifty efforts were made to save the men of France for cannon fodder in Europe by encouraging early marriage in the colony itself. Hundreds of girls were brought from the old land, and married out of hand to soldier and settler. The quick to wed were rewarded and the tardy punished. The State provided dowries of money or supplies, while in anticipation of Honoré Mercier, Louis XIV offered a pension of three hundred livres to all Canadians who had ten children living and four hundred for families of twelve—girls who had entered any religious order not being counted. Fathers were fined if their sons were not married at twenty or their daughters at sixteen, and marriageable bachelors were forbidden to set out hunting unless they undertook to marry within a fortnight of the arrival of the next matrimonial ship from France.<sup>1</sup> Not

<sup>1</sup> Colbert summed up the policy succinctly in a despatch to Talon in 1668: "I beg you to commend it to the consideration of the whole people that their well-being, their subsistence, and all that most nearly concerns them,

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even a Colbert could ensure that such drastic and paternal interference would be permanent, but pressure of Church and State and frontier conditions long made marriage at an early age a feature of New France.

This rapid marrying and the steady pushing back of the frontier which went with it, are brought out clearly in the annals of the Hébert and the Cottineau-Laurier families. Thanks to the care with which the parish registers were kept by the church authorities, and the tireless industry with which historians from Abbé Tanguay to M. Massicotte have delved into the records, and thanks also to the fact that immigration from France ceased early, making it possible to trace all the present families to the early stocks, we can follow the branching of these, as of countless other families of New France, without a break through the generations.

Jeanne Hébert, the only surviving daughter of Augustin Hébert and Adrienne Du Vivier, was married in Montreal in 1660, to Jacques Millot, son of Gabriel Millot and Julienne Phelippot; the bride was in her fourteenth year, but the husband, doubtless a newcomer, in his twenty-eighth. They did not quite earn the

depend on a general resolution, never to be broken, to marry youths at eighteen or nineteen years, and girls at fourteen or fifteen; in countries where everybody labors, and in Canada in particular, there is food for all, and abundance can never come to them except through abundance of men. . . . It would be well to double the taxes and duties of bachelors who do not marry at that age . . . and as regards those who seem to have utterly forsworn marriage it would be expedient to increase their taxes, to deprive them of all honors and even to attach to them some mark of infamy. . . . Even though the kingdom of France be as populous as any country in the world, it is certain that it would be difficult to maintain large armies and at the same time to send great numbers of settlers to distant lands. . . . It is then . . . chiefly to increase from marriage that we must look for the growth of the colony."

King's pension, for though they had ten children, not more than seven were living at one time. It was the eldest of these ten children, Madeleine Millot, who in 1677 in her fifteenth year, was married to the soldier of Carignan-Salières, François Cottineau, *dit* Champ-laurier, then approaching thirty-six.

Marriages in those days might be made early, but they were not contracted lightly. The marriage contract of François Cottineau and Madeleine Millot, which is still preserved, reveals with what a multitude of witnesses—kinsmen, neighbours, old regimental officers—the solemn undertaking was made, and with what thrifty and cautious care the future family finances were detailed and guarded.<sup>1</sup>

When the eldest of the four children of François Cottineau-Laurier, fittingly named Jean Baptiste, was married at twenty-six to Catherine Lamoureux, a girl of sixteen, youngest but one of a family of eleven, it was not at Montreal but at St. François in Ile Jésus, to the northeastward, that the marriage was performed. That even Colbert could not mould the people to his will is made clear by the fact that the two daughters of François Cottineau-Laurier did not marry until one was twenty-nine and the other was twenty-four. Jean Baptiste made his home at Lachenaie, across the river from St. François, but at first in the same parish. Here his quiverful of children were born—Jean Baptiste, Marie Catherine, Marie, Agathe, Jacques, Rose, Thérèse, Joseph, Pierre, Marie Anne, and Véronique.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I.

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Here it was, in 1742, that Jacques, his second son, at twenty-six, married Agathe Rochon, aged twenty-one, and here for three generations more the family took root.

In every parish from Tadoussac to Montreal the same story of early and fruitful marriage and of steady widening of the bounds of settlement is to be told. All along the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu the habitants were clearing their deep narrow holdings, winning an acre or two a year from the dense forest. Facing the river-road, the steep-roofed whitewashed houses of logs or field stone, a furlong apart, soon gave the river bank the air of an unending village street. Fur-trader and explorer, missionary and soldier, ventured far into the unknown West; while the English colonists were still clinging to the coast or breaking through the Appalachian barrier, the sons of New France were blazing trails from Texas to Hudson Bay and from the Atlantic to the foothills of the Rockies. Yet the great bulk of the population remained in the St. Lawrence valley, and in that community farming more and more became the mainstay.

Farming methods were crude, but the soil was rich and the habitant hard-working. Save in a rare famine year, he had in his fields abundance of wheat and oats, of corn and rye and the indispensable peas, and of fish and game and wild fruits in the river and forest at his door. Home-brewed ale and, later, home-grown and home-cured *tabac canadien* helped to pass the long winter nights. Every household was self-sufficient and self-contained. The habitant picked up something of many

a trade, and developed a versatility which marks his descendants to this day. From the iron-tipped wooden plough, the wooden harrow and shovel and rake, to the spinning-wheel that stood beside the great open fireplace, the many-colored rug, the homespun linens and *étouffe du pays*, the wooden dishes, the deerskin moccasin, the knitted tasselled toque and the gay sash, all were his own and his family's handiwork.

The habitant had found comfort. He had not yet found full freedom, though the independent strain in his blood and the democracy of the frontier ensured him much greater liberty than is usually recognized, and there was always the safety-valve of escape to the lawless life of the *coureur de bois*. In the wider affairs of the colony he had little voice. King and governor and intendant made his laws, with some slight aid from a nominated council; yet his taxes were light, and if he did not make the laws, neither did they greatly circumscribe his daily life. The seigneur counted for more in his eyes than the king, but had only a shadow of the authority wielded by feudal lords in France: the farmer proudly insisted that he was *habitant*, not *censitaire*. The Church came closest. The missionary aims of the founders of the colony, the unwearied devotion of the Church's servants, the outstanding ability of some of its servants, notably Bishop Laval—America's first prohibitionist—and the barring of heretics, gave the Church sweeping and for a time unquestioned and ungrudged authority. After Colbert came to office, and throughout the French régime, the State increasingly

asserted its power, controlling the Church in matters of tithes, the founding of new orders or communities, appeals from ecclesiastical courts, and many issues of policy, but the Church remained the dominant social influence in the colony.

Already New France had taken on a life and colour of its own. Governors and merchants and soldiers might come and go, but the ways of the colony were little changed. The striking and significant feature of these later years is the cessation of contact with France through immigration. The outburst of colonizing energy under Colbert proved brief. Louis XIV and Louis XV were seeking glory on European battle-fields, and could spare no men for the wilderness. Daring projects of American empire were staked out, but the men needed to hold and develop the vast arc from Montreal to New Orleans did not come. In the seventy years up to 1680 the colony had received at most three thousand immigrants from France; in the eighty years that followed, an incredibly small number came—a number which a distinguished authority, M. Benjamin Sulte, has put as low as one thousand all told. Through all this period France had more than twice the population of the British Isles, but did not send one settler to the New World for the twenty that Britain and Ireland urged and forced to go. In forty years half the Presbyterian population of Ulster sought refuge in the American colonies from British industrial and religious oppression; German, Dutch, Swiss settlers poured in during the eighteenth century by tens of thou-

sands. The numbers of Ulstermen and of Germans coming to the English colonies in a single year exceeded the number of French settlers who crossed the Atlantic in the century and a half from the beginning to the end of the French régime. Of the four or five hundred thousand Huguenots exiled from France more came to the English colonies than Catholic France could spare for her own New-World plantations, and the names of Bowdoin, Faneuil, Revere, Bayard, Jay, Maury, Marion, and many another bear witness of their quality. For all the rapid multiplying of the original stock in New France, it continued to be outnumbered by the English colonies twenty to one.

For New France this cessation of new settlement and the limitation of growth to the natural increase of population, meant isolation and the development of a distinctive, homogeneous community. With each year that passed the men of New France knew less of any country other than the land of their birth. For old France it meant defeat in the struggle for colonial empire, defeat which might be postponed by the bravery and resource of individual leaders, by the firm military organization of the people of New France, and by the disunion of the English colonies, but which could not be averted.

The French régime came to an end a century and a half after Champlain had raised the flag of France on the rock of Quebec. The new rulers were faced at once by the most serious difficulty that had yet beset any colonizing power. Here were nearly eighty thousand Frenchmen and Catholics, firmly rooted in the soil, with



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ways of life and thought fixed by generations of tradition. What was to be the attitude of their English and Protestant rulers? On the answer to that question hung the future of Canada, and the answer, or rather the answers, that were given shaped the problems and the tasks that in after days faced Wilfrid Laurier and his contemporaries and that in changing forms will face the Canadians of to-morrow.

The solution first adopted was what might have been expected in a time when the right of self-determination had not even become a paper phrase. It was simply to turn New France into another New England, to swamp the old inhabitants by immigration from the colonies to the south and to make over their laws, land tenure, and religion on English models. No little progress had been made in this attempt when the shadow of the American Revolution and the sympathy of soldier governors for the old autocratic régime and for the French-Canadian people about them brought a fateful change in policy. British statesmen determined to build up on the St. Lawrence a bulwark against democracy and a base of operations against the Southern colonies in case of war, by confirming the habitant in his laws, the seigneur in his dues, the priest in his authority. To keep the colony British, the government now sought to prevent it becoming English. The Quebec Act, the "sacred charter" of French-speaking Canada, embodied this new policy. A measure of success followed. Then the unexpected result of the American Revolution in exiling to the St. Lawrence and the St. John tens of thousands

of English-speaking settlers made it impossible to keep Canada wholly French, and the hatred for democracy and for all things French which developed during the wars with Napoleon made Englishmen unwilling to let French-speaking Canada rule itself.

The lesson which the statesmen in control in Britain learned from the two revolutions, the American and the French, was not the need of making terms with democracy, but the need of nipping democracy in the bud. Elective assemblies were conceded the people of Lower or French-speaking Canada, and Upper Canada, the newer English-speaking settlements to the west, as they had previously been granted to the old colony of Nova Scotia and the Loyalist settlement of New Brunswick, but beyond this British governments would not go. An all-guiding Colonial Office, a governor who really governed, an appointed, and but for the grace of God an hereditary, upper house which could always block the popular assembly, little cliques of a governing caste in control of administration, a church established and endowed to teach the people respect for authority, long barred the advance of self-government. Then the tide of democracy surging through the world, the constitutional campaigns of Baldwin and Papineau and Howe, the bullets of Mackenzie's and Chenier's men, the abandonment by Britain itself of the protectionist ideal of a self-contained empire, forced reform. This is not the place to repeat the familiar story of that early struggle for self-government. Later it will be necessary to consider what were the results of the



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Father of Wilfrid Laurier



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half-century of British policy and Canadian development, on the political and party situation, the unity of the provinces, the relations of Church and State, the sentiment of French-Canadian nationalism, the evolution of the colonial status, and the other issues which faced Wilfrid Laurier and his fellow-countrymen as they came to manhood.

While these affairs of state were in the balance, generation after generation of Lauriers were hewing their way through the Northern woods. It was in 1742 in the parish of Lachenaie that Jacques, second son of Jean Baptiste Laurier and Catherine Lamoureux, married Agathe Rochon. Charles Laurier, fourth of Jacques's five children, was a boy of eleven when the battles of the Plains of Abraham and of Ste. Foye were fought. In the year of the Quebec Act he married Marie Marguerite Parant, or Parent. Of their four children, only two, Charles and Toussaint, grew to manhood. With Charles Laurier the younger the capacity of the stock began to reveal itself and the environment to take the shape required to fit his grandson, Wilfrid Laurier, for the part he was to play in his country's life.

Charles Laurier, the grandfather of Wilfrid Laurier, was a man of unusual mental capacity and force of character. His interests and ambitions extended beyond the narrow range of habitant life. Not content with the scanty education available in the parish school, he mastered mathematics and land-surveying. He surveyed a great part of the old seigniory of Lachenaie, originally granted to Sieur de Repentigny in 1647, and later di-

vided, the western half, two leagues along the river and six leagues deep, falling in 1794 into the hands of Peter Pangman, "Bastonnais" or New Englander, famed for his exploits as fighter and fur-trader in the far North-West.

Charles Laurier had an ingenious and practical turn, which is evidenced by the fact that he was the first man in Upper or Lower Canada to obtain a patent for an invention. In 1822 he invented what he termed a *loch terrestre*, or "land log." The Quebec "Gazette" of June 24, 1822, noted that an ingenious machine to be attached to the wheel of a carriage for measuring the distance traversed had been exhibited that month in Quebec, and that it was the invention of Mr. Charles de Laurier, *dit* Cottineau, who intended to seek a patent from the legislature next session. A letter in the "Gazette" a few days later from Charles Laurier himself dealt at length with the device. He explained that the "land log" recorded automatically the number of revolutions of the carriage-wheel to which it was attached, the dials indicating in leagues and decimal fractions of a league the distance traversed. In a carriage to which this instrument had been attached, one could almost make a survey of a province while driving, provided one had a good compass.

In the summer of 1823 M. Laurier determined to put his suggestion into practice. He attached the instrument to the dashboard of a calèche, with five dials indicating respectively tens of leagues, units, tenths, hundredths, and thousandths. He drove from Lachenaie

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to Quebec city, recording the distance as 54 and 487/1000 leagues. The legislative assembly, after calling Joseph Bouchette, the surveyor-general of the province, and E. D. Wells, a Quebec watchmaker, as expert witnesses, decided to grant the patent. It was not until 1826, by which time five other patents had been registered, that the formalities were completed, the fees paid and the patent obtained. In the same year, 1826, we find him asking the Assembly for assistance in making experiments in measuring distances on water and recording the course of a vessel at sea. No aid was granted, and apparently nothing further came of the project.

In 1805 Charles Laurier married Marie Thérèse Cusson. To his son Charles, or Carolus, who was born in 1815, he gave a forest farm at St. Lin, on the river Achigan, some fifteen miles northeast of Lachenaie. Here the son followed in his father's footsteps, surveying and farming by turns, and here in 1840, when Carolus had been married some six years, Charles and his wife came to spend the rest of their days in a joint household.

The strong common sense of the elder Laurier, his frankness and his sturdy emphasis on independence are brought out clearly in the *étrennes* or New Year's blessing sent to Carolus in 1836:

(*Translation*)

NEW YEAR'S BLESSING OF CAROLUS LAURIER

January 1st, 1836

MY DEAR SON:

For New Year's blessing I am going to give you some ad-

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vice, and I hope that you will not scorn it, as you are now the head of a household, a substantial villager, and consequently a member of society.

Now in order to be a good member of society, you must be independent. Besides independence, many rules of conduct are understood, but that is the root of them all. Independence does not always mean riches! It means prudence, foresight in business so that you are not taken unawares and forced to yield or compromise with anyone. You must judge your own business, watch over everything that goes on in your house, in a word, over all that may help or hinder your interests.

You must subdue the flesh. That is to say, work reasonably, prudently and faithfully. A man of bodily activity may earn, without any exaggeration, 25 or 50 dollars a year more than an indolent man would. That may make an increase in his fortune of from 13 to 26 thousand francs at the end of 30 years.

Finally, my son, you are your own master; do as you please; I give you no commands. But if you wish to achieve independence, pray God to direct your thoughts and your work. It is spiritual and bodily activity which leads to independence: the indolent man is always in need. This precept may be of service to your wife and to everyone.

CHARLES LAURIER,

Your affectionate father.

The same Polonian prudence is evident in another New Year's letter, written this time to his daughter-in-law, in anticipation of the two households being joined:

NEW YEAR'S BLESSING OF MARCELLE MARTINEAU, WIFE OF  
CAROLUS LAURIER

*(Translation)*

January First, 1840.

DEAR MADAM:

As we intend to be joined together next year and for the rest of our days, unless we are greatly disappointed, God grant that we may live on good terms with one another. It is to



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Him that we must pray for this. Be resolute and patient. If we take care, both of us, not to be embittered against one another, we shall be able to live together happily, for it will be less costly to keep house for two families joined together than separated, as regards both household tasks and expense. If we have the good fortune to agree, we shall be happier together than apart. That is why we must fortify ourselves beforehand with prudence and patience and resignation. When we fear some misfortune, it is very seldom that it comes to us. Be wise and prudent.

CHARLES LAURIER.

Carolus Laurier had not the rugged individuality or the practical interests of his father, but he had his own full share of capacity. His keen wit, his genial comradeship, his generous sympathy, his strong, handsome figure, made him a welcome guest through all the French and Scotch settlements of the north country. He was more interested in political affairs than his father had been, and a strong supporter of the Liberal or "Patriot" demand for self-government. It was an index of his progressiveness that he was the first in the countryside to discard the flail for a modern threshing-machine.

It was to his mother that Wilfrid Laurier always felt he owed most. Marie Marcelle Martineau was born in L'Assomption in 1815. Her first Canadian ancestor was Mathurin Martineau, who emigrated to Canada from the same part of France as Jean Cottineau, about 1687; from this Martineau stock came the poet Louis Fréchette, who counted himself a Scotch cousin of Wilfrid Laurier. On her mother's side—Scholastique or Colette Desmarais—Marcelle Martineau had the blood of Acadian exiles in her veins. In 1834, when each was

nineteen, Carolus Laurier and Marcelle Martineau were married at L'Assomption. Marcelle Laurier was a woman of fine mind and calm strength, with an interest in literature and an appreciation of beauty in nature unusual in her place and time. She was passionately fond of pictures, though there was little opportunity to gratify her longing, and had a very good natural talent for drawing. In the home she made in St. Lin there was an intellectual interest and a grace and distinction of life which were to leave a lasting impress on the son who came to her in her twenty-seventh year.

In 1841 Carolus Laurier proudly recorded the following entry in his papers:

*(Translation)*

To-day, the twenty-second day of the month of November, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and forty-one, was baptised in the church of St. Lin, by Messire G. Chabot, curé for the said parish, Henri Charles Wilfrid, born the twentieth day of the present month, of the lawful marriage of Carolus Laurier, gentleman, land-surveyor, and Marie Marcelle Martinault. His godfather is Sieur Louis Charles Beaumont, Esq., gentleman, of Lechenaie; his godmother is Marie Zoé Laurier, wife of Sieur L. C. Beaumont.

On January 23, 1844, he records the birth and baptism that day of Marie Honorine Malvina Laurier.

Marcelle Martineau was not fated to be with her children long. She died in March, 1848, in her thirty-fifth year. But in the seven years of her son's life with her, she had so knit herself into his being that the proud and tender memory of her never faded from his deeply impressionable mind. A second blow came with the death,

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when barely eleven, of the sister who had grown very dear to him.

Carolus Laurier soon took a second wife, Adeline Ethier. By this marriage there were five children: Ubalde, who became a physician and died at Arthabaska in 1898; Charlemagne, for many years a merchant at St. Lin, and member for the county of L'Assomption in the House of Commons from 1900 until his death in 1907; Henri, prothonotary at Arthabaska, who died in 1906, and Carolus and Doctorée (Mme. Lamarche), both of whom survived their half-brother.

Adeline Laurier proved a very kindly and capable mother to all her flock. Her hold on the elder boy's warm affections, and incidentally her husband's light-hearted outlook on life, are brought out in a letter which Carolus wrote to a niece of his wife, many years after:

*(Translation)*

St. Lin, March 19, 1886.

I am almost certain to get well in spite of my seventy-one years, and I embarked on the seventy-second the day before yesterday, while the Irish were holding their procession in the streets of Montreal, and as that day is the day of their patron saint and their national festival, and as I came into the world 71 years ago, I think that is the reason why, when I was a widower, 5 or 6 old Irish damsels from New Glasgow used to come to mass at St. Lin every Sunday and my seat was always full of them. But the moment I married your aunt, pst! their devotion was at an end, and I found myself rid of these old girls, and my seat and the rest of the church likewise.

. . . That did not prevent me keeping my health and being very happy with your aunt, and my children too, for I am certain that Wilfrid loves his stepmother just as if she was his own mother. I always remember that at the age of eleven,

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when he came home from school, he would go and sit on his stepmother's lap to eat his bread and jam or bread and sugar, with his arms round her neck, and that he would put his "piece" on his knees and wipe his mouth with his handkerchief and kiss her over and over, and then pick up his "piece," eat a few mouthfuls and begin to kiss her again. . . .

CAROLUS L.

St. Lin in the early fifties was a prosperous frontier village. Twenty miles to the north the blue Laurentians set a barrier to further expansion. The village itself was the centre of a broad, fertile, slightly rolling plain, still covered for the most part with the maples and elms, the pine and spruce, of the primitive forest. Its great stone church towered high above the houses that lined the two straggling streets. The river Achigan, on which it lay, turned the wheels of the grist-mills on its banks, floated down the logs from the upper reaches, and, not least, provided fishing and swimming-holes for boys' delight. It was a quiet, pleasant home, well devised to give its children happiness in youth, strength in manhood, and serene memories in old age. Young Laurier shared in the usual children's games, though an old companion recalls that many a time when the boys would call, "Wilfrid, come, we are ready for a race," the answer from the boy bent over a book would be, "Just a minute," and again, "A minute more." He particularly delighted in wandering through the woods, sometimes with gun on his shoulder for rabbit or partridge, but more often with no other purpose than to search out bird and plant and tree. His sharp eyes and retentive memory gave him an intimate and abiding

knowledge of wood life of which few but his closest friends in later days were aware.

The boy's early schooling was given partly by his mother and partly in the parish school of St. Lin. Under the French régime a fair measure of elementary schooling had been provided, mainly by the religious orders, but with diversion of endowments to other ends and disputes between Church and State as to control, progress after 1763 had been slow. It was not until 1841 that an adequate system came into force. In the school in St. Lin, which is still standing, though no longer used as a school, the children of the late forties learned their catechism and the three R's. For the majority, no further training was possible. For the few who were destined for the Church, the bar or medicine, the classical college followed. In young Laurier's case a novel departure was taken.

Some seven miles west of St. Lin, on the Achigan, lay the village of New Glasgow. It had been settled about 1820, chiefly by Scottish Presbyterians belonging to various British regiments. Carolus Laurier in his work as a surveyor had made many friends in New Glasgow, and had come to realize the value of knowledge not only of English speech but of the way of life and thought of his English-speaking countrymen. He accordingly determined to send Wilfrid, at the age of eleven, to the school in New Glasgow for two years. Arrangements were made to have him stay with the Kirks, an Irish Catholic family, but when the time came illness in the Kirk household prevented, and it was necessary to seek

a lodging elsewhere. One of Carolus's most intimate friends was John Murray, clerk of the court and owner of the leading village store. Mrs. Murray took in the boy and for some months he was one of the family. The Murrays, Presbyterians of the old stock, held family worship every night. Wilfrid was told that if he desired he would be excused from attending, but he expressed the wish to take part, and night after night learned never-forgotten lessons of how men and women of another faith sought God. When Mrs. Kirk recovered, he went to her for the remainder of his two years in New Glasgow, but he was still in and out of the Murrays' every day, and many a time helped behind the counter in the store. The place he found in the life of the Kirks may be gathered from a passing remark in a letter from his father forty years later: "Nancy Kirk writes that her father is now over a hundred and beginning to wander in his mind: 'he does not see us at all, but talks of Wilfrid and of Ireland.'"

The school in New Glasgow was open to all creeds and was attended by both boys and girls. It was taught by a succession of unconventional schoolmasters, for the most part old soldiers. The work of the first year in New Glasgow, 1852-53, came to an abrupt end with the sudden departure of the master in April. A man of much greater parts, Sandy Maclean, took his place the following year. He had read widely, and was never so happy as when he was quoting English poetry by the hour. With a stiff glass of Scotch within easy reach on his desk, and the tawse still more prominent, he drew on

the alert and spurred on the laggards. His young pupil from St. Lin often recalled in after years with warm good-will the name of the man who first opened to him a vision of the great treasures of English letters.

The two years spent in New Glasgow were of priceless worth in the turn they gave to young Laurier's interests. It was much that he learned the English tongue, in home and school and playground. It was more that he came unconsciously to know and appreciate the way of looking at life of his English-speaking countrymen, and particularly to understand that many roads lead to heaven. It was an admirable preparation for the work which in later years was to be nearest to his heart, the endeavour to make the two races in Canada understand each other and work harmoniously together for their common country. Carolus Laurier set an example which French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians alike might still follow with profit to their children and their country.

New Glasgow was only an interlude. Carolus Laurier had determined to give his son as good a training as his means would allow. That meant first a long course in a secondary school, followed by professional study for law, medicine or the Church, the three fields then open to an ambitious youth. Secondary education in Lower Canada was relatively much more advanced than primary; the need of adequate training for the leaders of the community had been recognized earlier than the need or possibility of adequate training for all. The *petit séminaire* at Quebec and the Sulpicians' col-

lege at Montreal had trained the men who led their people in the constitutional struggles following 1791. Secondary schools or colleges, modelled largely on the French colleges and lycées, had early been established in the more accessible centres, in 1804 at Nicolet, in 1812 at St. Hyacinthe, in 1824 at Ste. Thérèse, in 1827 at Ste. Anne de la Pocatière, and in 1832 at L'Assomption. All were maintained and controlled by the Church.

In September, 1854, Wilfrid Laurier entered the college at L'Assomption in the town of the same name, on L'Assomption River twenty miles east of St. Lin. Here for seven years he followed the regular course, covering what in English-speaking Canada would be taken up in high school and the first years of college. The chief emphasis was laid on Latin; the good fathers succeeded not merely in grinding into their pupils a thorough knowledge of moods and tenses, but in giving them an appreciation of the masterpieces of Roman literature. Many a time in later years when leaving for a brief holiday Mr. Laurier would slip into his bag a volume of Horace or Catullus or an oration of Cicero, and, what is less usual, would read it. French literature was given the next place in their studies, the literature, needless to say, of the grand age, of Bossuet and Racine and Corneille, not the writings of the men of revolutionary and post-revolutionary days, from Voltaire to Hugo and Béranger. Briefer courses in Greek, English, mathematics, philosophy, geography and history completed the seven years' studies. It was a training of obvious limitations, but in the hands of good teachers such





THE VILLAGE SCHOOL, ST. LIN



L'ASSOMPTION COLLEGE



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as the fathers at L'Assomption were, it gave men destined for the learned professions an excellent mental discipline, a mastery of speech and style, and a sympathetic understanding of the life and culture of men of other lands and times.

The school discipline at L'Assomption was strict. The boys rose at 5:30, and every hour had its task or was set aside for meal-time or play-time. The college had not then built a refectory, and the students, though rooming in the college buildings, scattered through the town for their meals. Every Sunday, garbed in blue and black coat, collegian's cap, and blue sash, all attended the parish church; on week-days only the sash was worn. Once a week, on Thursday afternoons, there came a welcome half-holiday excursion to the country, usually to a woods belonging to the college a few miles away.<sup>1</sup> These excursions young Laurier enjoyed to the full, but he was not able to take much part in the more strenuous games of his comrades. The weak-

<sup>1</sup> During the celebration, in 1883, of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of L'Assomption, Mr. Laurier recalled to his friends, young and old, the part this holiday had held in their student life:

### *(Translation)*

"In my time, we began to think of the next holiday—when do you think? At the end of the holiday. All week, our main preoccupation was as to whether it would be fine next Thursday. All week, we studied the heavens with as much care and more anxiety than the Vennors of to-day. On Wednesday evening if the weather was fine, prayers were held in the open air on the ballground. Our prayers mounted straight to heaven. Invariably we ended by a canticle to her whom we called the patron saint of scholars. What we sang was that sweet canticle of which each stanza ends with the words so very appropriate to the thought which was filling our minds for the morrow: 'Grant us a good day.' Ah, with what confidence, with what ardour, our invocations rose to heaven! Even those who had no voice found one for the occasion. Next day our prayers had

ness which was to beset his early manhood was already developing, and violent exercise had been forbidden. His recreation took other forms. The literary part of the course, the glories of Roman and French and English literature, made a deep appeal to him. He took his full share in the warm and dogmatic discussions in which groups of the keener youngsters settled the problems of life and politics raised by their reading or echoed from the world outside. Sometimes a nearer glimpse was given of the activities of that outer world. Assize courts were held twice a year, and when election-time came round, joint debates between the rival candidates at the church door after Sunday mass or from improvised street platforms on a week-day evening were unalloyed delight. More than once he broke bounds to drink in the fiery eloquence of advocate or politician, well content to purchase a stimulating hour with the punishment that followed.

Wilfrid Laurier had come to L'Assomption with a strong leaning toward Liberalism. His father's freely spoken views, discussions of his elders overheard in St. Lin and New Glasgow, echoes of the eloquence of the great tribune Papineau, the reading of the history of Canada which Garneau had written to belie Durham's charge that French-speaking Canada had no literature, had awakened political interest and given him the bent

been granted: the weather was fine. The flag, messenger of good tidings, floated gaily at the top of the May-pole: it was 'the long holiday'; we were going to the woods. And I ask you, my old fellow-students, is there a single one of us who is not rejoicing that to-morrow will be 'the long holiday' and that we are going to the woods?"

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which his own temperament and his later reading confirmed. If the seed had not been vital and deeply planted, his Liberalism could scarcely have survived the Conservative atmosphere of L'Assomption. When the French-Canadian majority which had fought solidly for self-government divided, once self-government was attained, into Liberals and Conservatives, the great mass of the clergy, as will be noted later, took the Conservative turning. The college authorities and the great majority of his fellow-students looked with more than suspicion on his political heresies. When a debating society which young Laurier had helped to organize ventured on still more dangerous ground, taking up the highly contentious theme over which historians have shed quarts of ink: "Resolved, that in the interests of Canada the French kings should have permitted the Huguenots to settle here," and when the student from St. Lin took the affirmative and pressed his points home, the scandalized *préfet d'études* intervened, and there was no more debating at L'Assomption. Yet these differences were not serious. The relations between teachers and pupils were very friendly. Young Laurier was soon recognized as the most promising student of his time, and it was with pride that the authorities and his fellows chose him to make the orations or read the addresses on state occasions.

Students of all political tendencies and of none were graduated from L'Assomption. It was the alma mater, though in the days before the rise of parties (1835-42),

of the giant Rouge tribune, Joseph Papin, *le gros canon du parti démocratique*, who is still commemorated in the college halls, with laudable impartiality, as *vir statura, voce et dialectica potens*, and of Léon Simeon Morin (1841-48), his brilliant Conservative opponent, who shot like a fiery meteor across the political sky of Canada. Louis A. Jetté, founder of the Parti National which sought to reconcile Liberalism and the Church, and later an eminent judge, left L'Assomption the year before Wilfrid Laurier entered. Arthur Dansereau, for many years the leading Conservative journalist in Quebec, was a year his junior, while in his last year there entered a young lad from Lanoraie whose path was to cross his many a time in the future, the stormy petrel of Quebec politics, J. Israel Tarte.

The seven years soon passed and the momentous day of graduation came. Of the twenty-three members of his class (the 22nd "course") only nine completed the seven years. The interests of the class were well divided. Of the later career of three, two of whom went to the Western States, no record is available. Of the other twenty, three became barristers (*avocats*) and three notaries, these six providing the three who won legislative honours; four became priests, four doctors, and three farmers, two entered business, and one died while at school.

Wilfrid Laurier's ambitions had long been turned toward law, and when he left L'Assomption at the age of nineteen it was with the purpose of beginning immediately to study for the bar. The leading law school of

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Canada was then the Faculty of Law at McGill University. It had a strong staff of judges and of barristers in active practice, and the offices of the city gave ample opportunity for training in the routine of law. The law faculty of Laval University, Montreal, it may be noted, was not established until 1878.

To Montreal, then, Wilfrid Laurier journeyed in the fall of 1861, with high hopes but some foreboding as to what life in a large city would mean. He found a place in the office of Rodolphe Laflamme, one of the leaders of the Montreal bar and a very aggressive Rouge or advanced Liberal. The salary paid, though small, was a very welcome supplement to the funds his father had been able to advance.

The three-year course, which led to the degree of Bachelor of Civil Law, covered not only the basic systems of our jurisprudence, the civil law of Rome and the common law of England, but the developments which custom and legislators and code-makers had brought about in English-speaking and French-speaking Canada. The lectures were given in English or French, according to the mother tongue of the speaker. Mr. Laurier, with his New Glasgow training and his later reading, had no great difficulty in following the English lectures. He had more trouble at first in understanding the Latin phrases in the lectures on Roman law delivered by Justice Torrance, for at that time the English pronunciation of Latin was almost the universal rule among English-speaking scholars. Hon. J. J. C. Abbott, dean of the faculty, and destined thirty

years later to become in a party emergency Prime Minister of Canada, was a sound and authoritative teacher of commercial law. Rodolphe Laflamme taught customary law and the law of real estate, and Hon. Wm. Badgeley and E. C. Carter criminal law. Throughout, Wilfrid Laurier ranked high in his work, though for the comfort of those students who gather instances of men succeeding in examinations and failing in the sterner tests of life, it may be noted that the one man who ranked higher was never heard of again. In his first and again in his third year, he stood second in general proficiency, and at graduation was first in the thesis required of all candidates for the degree. He was accordingly chosen to give the valedictory. It is not customary to find in student valedictories mature and original contributions to the philosophy of life. The address given on this occasion had its share of the rhetoric of youth, but it was a really notable utterance. The young valedictorian sketched a picture, somewhat idealized perhaps, of the lawyer's place in the nation's life, forecasting in more than one particular the principles which were to guide his own public career. The duty and the opportunity of the lawyer to maintain private right, to uphold constitutional liberty, and to work for the harmony of the two races in Canada, were strongly emphasized in vigorous and glowing phrase.

Valedictories butter no parsnips. No time could be lost in seeking to make a living. Mr. Laurier was admitted to the bar of Quebec in 1864, and in October of that year began practice in Montreal as a member of the firm of Laurier, Archambault and Désaulniers.



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All three partners were keen and ambitious, but the city seemed well satisfied with the old established firms, and clients were few. Finding difficulty in tiding over the months of waiting, the partners dissolved in April, 1865. Mr. Laurier then formed a partnership with Médéric Lanctot. Lanctot was a fiery and brilliant speaker, of unbounded energy and audacity, but poorly ballasted with judgment and fated for all his lavish endowment to wreck his career. The partners were curiously assorted—the older man eager, passionate, fond of lively company, ready to debate any question in heaven above or earth beneath; the younger, reserved, retiring, firmly rooted in his convictions but calm and balanced in their defence. Lanctot was absorbed in politics, writing, speaking, organizing petitions against Cartier's Confederation policy. Laurier was left to carry on most of the work of the office. Their rooms were the meeting place of an eager group of young lawyers, burning with opinion or phrases on the political issues of the day, and in Quebec fashion turning lightly from law to journalism. Ill-health and his reserve and moderation of temper kept Mr. Laurier from taking an active part in their discussions, but friendships were formed and opinions shaped which counted for much in after years.

The question of his health was in fact now giving him serious concern. Throat and lung trouble had developed, accompanied by serious hemorrhages. Many of his friends felt that a quiet country town would give a better fighting chance than a crowded city. Antoine Dorion, his most valued friend, and the Liberal leader

in Canada East,<sup>1</sup> advised him to open a law office in the growing village of L'Avenir, in the Eastern Townships, and to combine with the law the editing of the weekly newspaper, "Le Défricheur," which Dorion's younger brother, Eric, had founded and managed until his death in 1866. Mr. Laurier felt that the advice was sound, and in November, 1866, he left Montreal for the little backwoods village. A brief residence convinced him that in spite of its optimistic name L'Avenir had no future, and accordingly he moved his newspaper and his law office to Victoriaville, thirty miles further east. While Victoriaville, as the railway centre of the district, became in time the chief business town, Mr. Laurier concluded that his law practice would flourish more securely in the judicial centre or *chef lieu* of the district, St. Christophe, or, as it was later termed, Arthabaskaville, and early in 1867 he opened his office in the picturesque little town which was to be his home for the next thirty years.<sup>2</sup>

One further personal episode, and that the most important of his career, remains to be chronicled before sur-

<sup>1</sup>The two provinces of Lower Canada and Upper Canada nominally became one after 1841, but the old names lingered in popular usage, and the corresponding division into Canada East and Canada West held a measure of official sanction until at Confederation the present names of Quebec and Ontario were substituted.

<sup>2</sup>On the eve of his departure for Arthabaska, "Le Pays" records a banquet given by his Montreal friends at the Hotel St. Louis in his honour. The gathering was notable, the toasts many and all duly honoured. Among the friends recorded as present were Edmond Angers, L. O. David, J. A. Chapleau, C. A. Geoffrion, G. Doutre, L. A. Jetté, Médéric Lanctôt, T. R. Laflamme, Charles Marcil, F. X. Rainville, and J. C. Robidoux.



WILFRID LAURIER  
At twenty-four



veying the beginnings of his public interests and activities in Montreal and the Townships.

When Wilfrid Laurier first came to Montreal he knew little of the city or its people—his only memory of it a child's awe-struck vision of endless houses and endless people, glimpsed from a crowded seat in a carriole, a dozen winters before. Neighbours in St. Lin reminded him of a close friend of his mother, Mme. Gauthier, whose husband had been the village doctor in Marcelle Laurier's short married life. Dr. Gauthier was now practising in Montreal. The young student went to their home, and lived with them two of his five Montreal years.

Both Dr. and Mme. Gauthier were much interested in music and both were hospitably inclined. They kept open house for a wide circle of young people of like tastes. In this group Wilfrid Laurier took his place, but it was within the house that he found his absorbing interest. Mme. Lafontaine and her daughter Zoë were also living at the Gauthiers'. Not many months had passed before the vivacious charm, the piquant blending of deep kindness and straight-spoken frankness, the wit and judgment, and the musical gifts of Mlle. Lafontaine had completely captured young Laurier's heart. Nor was it long until Mlle. Lafontaine had come to feel that this quiet young man of reserved but assured power, of strikingly handsome figure, of unfailing courtesy to all about him, who had already an air of distinction and a touch of the *grand seigneur* which

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made all eyes follow him, was the centre of her world. But he was as yet only a student at law, and she was earning her living as a teacher of music. Marriage seemed out of the question for long years. Then came the increasing grip of illness on his frail body, and the removal to Arthabaskaville without any definite understanding between them. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>To this period naturally belong Mr. Laurier's few lapses into poetry, of which the following unpublished verses are typical:

### LE TEMPS

Comme l'onde qui fuit de rivage en rivage,  
Sans suspendre jamais son cours sur nulle plage,  
Tels poussés du destin qui nous tient enchaînés  
Nos jours fuient du berceau vers la tombe entraînés.

Le Temps marche toujours d'une aile infatigable;  
Il n'est point de repos pour sa main redoutable;  
Elle va, détruisant, bâtissant tour à tour,  
Pour bâtir et détruire encore un autre jour.

Si quelqu' éclair de joie illumine ma vie,  
En vain je prie au Temps, en vain je le supplie  
De ralentir l'essor de son vol destructeur,  
De me laisser jouir d'un instant de bonheur.

Comme un gladiateur dans la cité romaine,  
Aux cent mille bravos du peuple dans l'arène,  
Étreint son ennemi de son bras de géant,  
L'étouffe et, plein d'orgueil, le rejette sanglant,

Tel le Temps me saisit dans le sein de ma joie;  
Il m'entraîne avec lui, comme l'aigle sa proie;  
Il m'abandonne enfin; sa main me laisse aller,  
Pour me reprendre, et puis, me laisser retomber.

January 5, 1863.

### A UN PAPILLON

Doux petit papillon, à peine dans la nuit  
Commence de briller ma lampe solitaire,  
Comme le plomb fatal, qui vers le but s'enfuit,  
Tu tombes palpitant sur la pâle lumière.

Et chaque fois pourtant tes pures ailes d'or  
A la flamme brûlante ont laissé des parcelles:

## THE MAKING OF A CANADIAN

Separation and time did not weaken affection, but neither did they remove the barriers. There were weeks of doubt when Mr. Laurier was convinced that his days were numbered and that he could not fairly ask any girl to share them. Then would come days of hope and determination, and in his letters he would insist that he could and would recover. In the meantime other suitors were pressing, and particularly a physician in good practice and good circumstances in Montreal. Prudence, friends urged that it was quixotic to refuse this suitor because of an interest in a struggling country lawyer, with a most uncertain lease of life. The pressure won. The engagement of Mlle. Lafontaine and her Montreal suitor was announced. Then ten days before the marriage was to have taken place, Fate, in the cheery person of Dr. Gauthier, intervened. He telegraphed Mr. Laurier to come to Montreal at once on important business. He came, saw, conquered. The young couple determined to heed their own hearts and their own half-believed hopes. In reality Mlle. Lafontaine did not believe that their married life would be longer than a year or two, but if she could make her husband's life happier and easier for that time, she was prepared to make the venture. Action followed quickly. A special dispensation was secured, and at

Quel atroce plaisir peut t'amener encore  
Y chercher aujourd'hui des tortures nouvelles?

Comme toi, papillon, jadis naïf enfant,  
A gravir du succès l'inaccessible cime,  
J'ai versé sans profit le meilleur de mon sang,  
Et de ma folle ardeur suis retombé victime.

May, 1867.

eight o'clock that evening, May 13, 1868, Wilfrid Laurier and Zoë Lafontaine were married. As he had to appear in court in Arthabaskaville next morning, he left at ten the same evening, returning three days later to take Mme. Laurier back to their new home. They had challenged fortune, and fortune yielded to their faith. Soon the shadows lifted, and they entered on fifty years of rare happiness and close communion. That was for the future to disclose, but already in marrying Mlle. Lafontaine, Wilfrid Laurier had achieved half his career.



## CHAPTER II

### THE POLITICAL SCENE

The Union Era—*The Reshaping of Parties*: Responsible Government—Bédard and Papineau—Papineau and LaFontaine—The Rise of the Rouges—The Liberal-Conservatives—Parties at Confederation—*The Rise of Nationalism*: A Conflict of Races—Laurier on Durham—The Failure of Durham's Policy—Barriers to National Unity—Laurier and Confederation—*Church and State*: The Church under Two Regimes—The Rouges and Rome—The Passing of L'Avenir—The Institute Controversy—Laurier and Le Défricheur.

**I**N the Canada of the sixties a young man's fancies lightly turned to thoughts of politics. Public life dominated the interest of the general public and stirred the ambition of the abler individuals in far greater measure than is true in these days when business makes a rival appeal. Particularly in Lower Canada, a political career was the normal objective, or at least the visioned hope, of the majority of the young men of education and capacity.

From boyhood days Wilfrid Laurier had been keenly interested in public affairs. His student apprenticeship and his first years of practice in Montreal gave an opportunity for forming political connections and taking a part in public controversies which strongly confirmed his early leanings. Now, as editor of the chief democratic journal of the Eastern Townships, he was a chartered guide of public opinion. His law practice brought him into close contact with all parts of the district, and before five years had passed he was marked as the des-

tined standard-bearer of the Liberals of the county.

Wilfrid Laurier was born in the year that Upper and Lower Canada were yoked together in uneasy fellowship. He had just begun the practice of law at Arthabaskaville when the union of the two Canadas was dissolved and the wider federation of all the mainland provinces was achieved. It was in the Canada of the Union era that the stage was set and the players trained for the comedies and the tragedies, the melodrama and the vaudeville, of Confederation politics.

The stage was not a large one. The province of Canada was just emerging from its years of pioneer struggles and backwoods isolation. Its two million people seemed to count for little in the work of the world. Neither Britain nor France nor the United States gave them more than a passing thought. Even with the other provinces of British North America they had little contact: no road or railway bound them. Until well on in the Union period, each section had closer relations with the adjoining states than with its sister provinces—Upper Canada with “York” State, Lower Canada with New Hampshire and Vermont, and the Maritime provinces with Maine and Massachusetts.

Yet if it was not large, the provincial stage witnessed its full share of the dramatic motives and movements of political life. Here experiments were worked out in the organization of government and of parties, in the relation of race with race, in the connection between Church and State, and in the linking of colony and empire, which deeply influenced the development of the

future Dominion and were not without interest to the world beyond.

In the words of Mr. Laurier, in an unpublished fragment of a work he long planned to write, had fate given him leisure,—the political history of Canada under the Union,—

A new era began with the Union. In this new era there was found nothing of that which had given the past its attraction, neither the great feats of arms to save the native soil from invasion, nor the intrepid journeys of the explorers led on and on by an unquenchable thirst for the unknown, nor the journeys, more intrepid still, of the missionaries everywhere marking with their blood the path for the explorers. The very parliamentary battles on which henceforth the attention of the nation was to be concentrated no longer bore the striking impress which had been stamped on the parliamentary struggles after the Conquest by the prestige of those who took part in them, the greatness of the cause which was defended, and the bloody catastrophe which was their outcome.

Colourless these pages may be, but they are not barren. They recall an epoch which, in spite of failures, was on the whole fruitful, in which the patriot's eye may follow with legitimate pride the calm, powerful and salutary influence of free institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The tasks of government and the scope and organization of parties had been greatly modified by the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841. The Union Act brought together two communities of deeply varying ways and traditions, communities which for fifty years had had their separate governments and their local parties. The mere union of the two provinces would have made it necessary to shift the bases of political activity, but union further brought in its train respon-

<sup>1</sup> Translation.

sible government, and responsible government involved as an essential condition the existence of political parties more definite and coherent than had hitherto existed in the Canadas.

The insistence of the Reformers of Upper Canada and the Patriotes of Lower Canada, through years of struggle, upon a greater share in their own governing, and the shock of the rebellion of 1837, had compelled British statesmen to recognize at last that concessions must be made. Under Durham's guidance, they had come to see that the concession should take the form which Robert Baldwin, the leader of the Upper Canada Reformers, had long demanded—the grant, in some measure, of responsible government. Responsible government meant in essence that the administration of the country should be entrusted to the leaders of the dominant party in parliament, rather than, as in the past, to the governor and the bureaucrats whom he appointed. But how could such freedom, even with the restrictions with which in early years the concession was hedged about, be granted to a colony like Lower Canada, where the majority would inevitably be composed of French-Canadians? English statesmen could bring themselves, with difficulty, to admit the need of self-government for the colonists of English speech and traditions in Upper Canada, but to propose the same policy for a colony alien in blood and tongue and sympathy appeared to them beyond discussion. Only by uniting the provinces, to assure an English-speaking majority, could the experiment be risked. Nor was the Union



Mlle. ZOË LAFONTAINE



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only negatively directed against French-Canadian aspirations. Its framers hoped to make Union a positive means of anglicizing French Canada, of bringing the habitant to realize the folly of isolation in a continent of English speech. How they fared in this endeavour will be noted later.

The primary task of the forties was the winning and consolidation of responsible government. Governor after governor and tenant after tenant of Downing Street sought to set narrow bounds to the concession that had been found unavoidable, but in vain. Robert Baldwin, "the man of one idea," and Louis Hippolyte LaFontaine, leader, in Papineau's enforced absence, of the Lower Canada Liberals, stood firm in their insistence that complete control of the domestic affairs of the province must be conceded to a body of ministers responsible to parliament and chosen from its dominant parties. Sydenham fought their demands, but by making himself the leader of a party majority in the Assembly played into the hands of those who insisted that party majorities should rule. Bagot, less assertive in temper, made some concessions of intention and more through the accident of illness. Metcalfe, sent out by the Colonial Office as the last bulwark of authority, breasted the tide with success for a year or two, but at last was compelled to recognize his failure. Elgin, the last of the governors of the forties, gave formal recognition of the victory of the upholders of self-government by summoning LaFontaine and Baldwin to form the ministry of 1848.

On this question of responsible government, the conclusions of Mr. Laurier, embodied in the same pregnant fragment, are of particular interest because of his early relations with the Rouges and the exponents of the Papineau tradition, and his own long experience of the working of the system:

Thus Lord Durham's idea had been realized, but its realization had only been gradual. The theory of Lord John Russell continued to be the theory of Lord Sydenham, of Sir Charles Metcalfe and of the Colonial Office, until Lord Elgin, who to the generous spirit of Lord Durham added a capacity perhaps more solid, grasped the great reformer's idea and applied it with as much freedom as he himself would have done.

If, to the England of 1840, the idea of the responsibility of ministers appeared incompatible with the colonial status, the colony was more advanced on this point than the mother country.

In Upper Canada a large group, more important even for talent than for numbers, had long been demanding the responsibility of ministers to the Assembly. The men of this party had found in Lord Durham's report the expression of the ideas which they had long been professing. They had voted without hesitation for the proposal for union, because they had hoped that Lord Durham's report would be acted upon in its entirety. Nevertheless, it was not in Upper Canada, nor in the British population [of Lower Canada] that the idea of ministerial responsibility as applied to the government of the colonies had seen the light for the first time. The man who was the first to affirm the principle of ministerial responsibility in the government of the colonies was Joseph Bédard, and that as early as 1809. Nevertheless, this weighty suggestion had not been followed up. A few years later, Bédard had withdrawn from the arena and Mr. Papineau had entered it. The policy enunciated by Bédard had been set aside, to give place to another much bolder. In all the long struggles that Mr. Papi-



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neau carried on with the government, he does not seem ever to have dreamed that the concession of constitutional government might be a sufficient reform and that he himself might become the minister in control. All his efforts were unceasingly directed toward establishing the supremacy of the Assembly over the executive power, and toward making the executive power the executor of the will of the Assembly. Under a constitutional monarchy, it is true, the ministry exists only with the consent of the elective branch, but in reality, it is the ministry that dominates the Assembly. The Assembly has numbers and strength, but it allows itself to be led and dominated until the time when, changing its mind, it resumes its power only to let itself be dominated once more by others. This system is doubtless not the perfect ideal that a thinker might dream of, nevertheless it is the system, of all invented by man, which has taken away least of individual liberty. This is not the system that Mr. Papineau sought. Mr. Papineau seemed to conceive a state of things in which in point of fact the Assembly would be sovereign, and in which the Administration's sole duty would be to carry out its decrees. Everything was subordinated to secure this result, and certainly, if it had been secured, it would have been good enough. Yet Mr. Papineau's thought went much farther still. In the debates on the 92 resolutions, he allows us to see clearly his republican ideals: "It is the obvious destiny of the continent, and since a change must be made in our constitution, is it a crime to make it with this conjecture in view?" The man who used such words could have only one end in view: independence.

Responsible government meant party government. Only through party organization could there be assured a stable and united majority to back the ministry in power, and a definite opposition to criticize that ministry and stand prepared to provide an alternative administration. And yet the very winning of responsible

government, and the union of the provinces which was bound up with it, made it extremely difficult to find or keep stable and effective political parties.

The weakness and instability of parties in this period had two roots. One was the union of the provinces, a union which brought together extremely diverse elements and yet was not sufficiently complete to merge and fuse them. Union made it necessary to organize a majority not in one section alone but in the whole province, and to organize it out of parties which hitherto had had little contact or little in common. At the same time the incomplete and semi-federal character of the union prevented the complete assimilation which the smooth working of the party machinery demanded. From the beginning there had been a recognition of continuing separateness in the provision that each section of the province, irrespective of population, should be given half the number of representatives in the legislature. As time went on, this separateness was confirmed by the practice of passing laws applying only to one section, by holding the sessions of parliament alternately in Quebec and in Toronto, by the inclusion in the cabinet of both an Attorney-General West and an Attorney-General East, and by the custom of a double-barrelled leadership, two "premiers," LaFontaine-Baldwin, Macdonald-Cartier, Brown-Dorion. It was inevitable under such circumstances that any union of parties from Canada East and Canada West should be, not a complete merging, but only a coalition of more or less stability.

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The other source of party weakness lay in the breaking up of the existing parties in each section because of the achievement of old aims or the emergence of new issues. The Tory parties, the defenders of the established order, were broken up by defeat, by the steady destruction of one after another of the planks in the platform upon which they had stood and fought. The control of colonial affairs by the mother country, the authority within the province of the governor and his preordained advisers, the active share in legislation of the narrow, nominated legislative council, the endowment of a state church in Upper Canada by the grant of vast areas of crown lands, the maintenance in Lower Canada of that survival of medieval feudalism, seigniorial tenure, these and other principles of the old ascendancy parties went by the board in the late forties and early fifties. To their opponents victory proved almost as disintegrating as defeat. The Reformers in Upper Canada, the Patriote or Canadien or Liberal party in Lower Canada, had within their ranks diverse elements which only opposition to a common foe could hold together. Once victory, or an instalment of victory, was won, these latent differences became apparent. The moderate men who were content to abide in a half-way house and the radicals who were eager to push on to the end of the vanishing road, now parted company. The experience gained in actual administration brought out differences of temperament and interest. New economic issues, canal and railway projects, tax and tariff questions, forced new alignments. The outcome

was curiously parallel to the reorganization of parties which was going on at the same time in Great Britain. In both cases, Tories were mellowing into Conservatives and the victorious opposition breaking up into Whigs and Radicals, or into moderate Liberals and Clear Grits or Rouges.

In Canada West, Robert Baldwin was the leader and the best representative of the moderate Reformers. Scrupulously fair, sturdily independent, he was prepared to fight without rest or truce for the right as he saw it, but equally prepared to find the right on most political and economic issues midway between the extreme positions. He fought until he had achieved responsible government, but he was unwilling to use the new powers to secure all the sweeping changes his more impatient followers demanded. The malcontents were led at first by Dr. Rolph and William Lyon Mackenzie, of the left wing of the old Reform party, but later they drew to themselves new men like William McDougall, disappointed Tories like Malcolm Cameron, and latest and greatest, George Brown, a powerful journalist and tribune, newly come from Scotland. The Clear Grits, as these uncompromising stalwarts came to be known, were, in the first place, more democratic than the Baldwin Reformers, insisting on a widely extended suffrage, vote by ballot, and the abolition of property qualifications for members. Unlike Baldwin, who looked wholly to England for his political inspiration, most of them (Brown excepted) were inclined to find the United States the last word in democracy, and particularly

when disillusioned by discovering that even Liberals when in office could be arbitrary and high-handed, they sought to lessen the power of governments by extending the elective principle, proposing to elect not merely the legislative council or upper house, but the governor and the chief administrative officials. A third point of difference lay in their more sweeping insistence on Canadian autonomy. A still more marked characteristic was their strong anti-clerical bias, which first found vent in their opposition to the endowment and establishment of the Church of England, but later, under George Brown's vigorous impulse, turned chiefly into suspicion and denunciation of Roman Catholic intrigue and domination of the province by "priest-ridden French-Canadians."

In Canada East, the causes of the split in the Liberal ranks were in part strikingly alike and in part significantly different. Louis Hippolyte LaFontaine, who stood head and shoulders above all his Canadian contemporaries in capacity, was, like Baldwin, emphatically a Whig rather than a Radical. A member of the old Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada in his twenties, he had ardently supported Papineau's strongest demands, but had opposed any resort to arms, and on the failure of the rebellion, his compatriots turned unanimously to his prudent and sober leadership. Massive in intellect, cold and judicial in temperament, thorough and untiring in his habits of work, Napoleonic in physique—the story ran that on his visit to Paris, the guards at the Invalides, in great excitement, presented arms to

their resurrected emperor, not greatly displeasing the Canadian visitor thereby—LaFontaine dominated the political scene throughout the forties. But hardly had he taken power, in 1848, when a rift in the party appeared, and steadily widened until in disdain of factional quarrelling he retired from political life in 1851, at the age of forty-four.

The group which chafed under LaFontaine's leadership, which later formed a distinct party called by themselves the Democrats and by their enemies the Rouges, and which eventually became under Laurier the Quebec wing of the Canadian Liberal party, was a strange product of many personal and social factors. Its first leader and rallying-centre was the old tribune, Louis Joseph Papineau. Returning to Canada in 1847 after a ten-years' exile, he had entered parliament the following year. Intercourse in Paris with republican and socialist circles had strengthened his democratic tendencies, though altering little his views on the economic ordering of society—to the last he remained the seigneur.<sup>1</sup> After a lifetime of uncompromising opposition and criticism, he found it difficult to accept the irksome

<sup>1</sup>The influences to which Papineau was subjected in Paris are indicated in the notice contained in the last issue of "L'Avenir," January 21, 1852, on the death, at twenty-one, of his son, Philippe Gustave Papineau: "With what eagerness he would tell us of his first impressions of life in Paris! At the feet of Béranger or Lamennais he had heard a language at the time unintelligible, but which had left indelible impressions on his memory. Good old Béranger he had seen, bent by age, at play under the trees of the garden, and going about harnessed to a little child's wagon. Intercourse with men like Béranger, Lamennais, Louis Blanc and other leaders of the republican party, who expressed freely among friends the opinions which were at the time suppressed on the platform and in the press, had helped to form in this young and impressionable heart the tendencies which family tradition had already stamped there."

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responsibilities of a party in office; after a lifetime as unquestioned dictator of his people, he could not bend his proud spirit to accept the leadership of his former lieutenant. Doctrinaire, unchanging in the changing times, conscious of his powers and of his rectitude, he set himself from the first in violent opposition to the opportunist and conservative measures and tactics of LaFontaine, and never modified his position until his retirement from active politics in 1854. Around him there gathered a group of fiery young Montrealers, who have never had their like in Canadian politics for sheer ability, crusading zeal, and reckless frankness—Antoine Aimé Dorion, Eric Dorion, Charles Laberge, Louis Labrèche-Viger, Joseph Papin, Rodolphe Laflamme, Joseph Doutre, Charles Daoust, P. R. LaFrenaye, and scores of others destined to play an active part in professional or public life. They were all in their early twenties. Nearly all the leaders among them were lawyers or journalists, not too burdened with clients or commissions to be unable to give their time to set the world right. They had their full share of youth's heady impatience with the hesitations and compromises of the middle years, the indifference and conservatism of old age.<sup>1</sup> They were temporarily elated by the sweeping success they had scored, on the platform and the streets, with argument and the clubs which often took the place of argument in those days of open polling and organized political rioting, in assisting to carry to victory the

<sup>1</sup> "In our century, he who keeps the middle path is shattered, he who does not go forward is crushed; it is the divine law of progress which decrees it so."—"L'Avenir," Nov. 22, 1848.

Liberal or LaFontaine candidates in Montreal in the general election of 1847. More enduringly they kindled to the call of the surging forces of democracy and nationalism in Europe, sympathizing deeply with the generous aims of the revolution against the accepted order which swept that continent in the memorable year of 1848. Canada was far geographically and farther mentally from the France of Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin, but the vigorous flame leaped the ocean and even bridged for a moment the gulf between the old France which had gone through three revolutions and the New France which still clung to seventeenth-century ways.

The issues they urged were partly nationalist, partly democratic. When LaFontaine abandoned the demand for the repeal of the Union with Upper Canada which had been forced upon the French-Canadians, Papineau and his young Rouges took up the cry. When repeal appeared impossible, they called for at least the representation in parliament that Lower Canada's population warranted. Democracy of the French and American patterns, with fixed term of parliament and sessions, universal suffrage and elective officials; decentralization of political power and judicial activities; demands foreshadowing the recall, and safeguarding the independence of parliament by forbidding members to accept office within a year of occupying a seat in the House; freer trade, economical administration, the development of agriculture, the widest possible expansion of education; the abolition of all class and ecclesiastical privilege—the seigneur's dues, the priest's tithes, the



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Protestant Clergy Reserves,—were the other more important planks in their platform. A little later they joined the disappointed Tories in urging annexation to the United States, though in a few years this demand faded from their banners.<sup>1</sup> Altogether a programme well calculated *pour épater les bourgeois*.

The eager, reforming spirit of these democratic youths found more than one expression. The first outlet was the famous “Institut Canadien” founded in December, 1844, as a means of mutual education. The institute

### <sup>1</sup> OUR POLITICAL CREED

L’Avenir, Jan. 4, 1850.

Education as wide-spread as possible.

Agricultural improvement: establishment of model farms.

Colonization of waste lands available for the poorer classes.

Free navigation of the St. Lawrence.

Free trade as far as possible.

Judicial reform; decentralization of the judiciary; codification of laws.

Postal reform; free circulation of newspapers.

Less extravagant administration of the government than at present; reduction of salaries in all branches of the public service and of the number of employees.

Municipal organization based on the parish; decentralization of power.

Elective institutions everywhere—elective governor, elective legislative council, elective magistrates; all the heads of public departments made elective.

Electoral reform based on population.

Universal suffrage.

Eligibility for office dependent on the confidence of the people.

Summoning and length of parliamentary sessions fixed by law.

Every representative of the people forbidden by a special law to accept any remunerative office from the Crown during the exercise of his mandate and for one year after its expiry.

Abolition of seigniorial tenure.

Abolition of the tithing system.

Abolition of Protestant Clergy Reserves.

Abolition of the system of state pensions.

Abolition of the privileges of lawyers, and liberty granted every man to defend his own cause.

Equal rights, equal justice for all citizens.

The repeal of the Union.

Finally and above all; Independence of Canada and its annexation to the United States.

provided for its members a library and reading-room, public lectures, and an open forum for debates.<sup>1</sup> It met a need which hitherto had been wholly neglected, and exercised wide influence in Montreal and in other centres where similar institutes were soon established, until a long and bitter struggle with the Church brought disension and defeat. A club modelled on the latest Parisian political organizations, *Le Club National et Démocratique*, had a much shorter career. To reach the general public they took over, in January, 1848, a struggling weekly, "*L'Avenir*," which another group, more interested in literature than in politics, had established a few months earlier. With Eric Dorion as editor, and Labrèche-Viger, Doutre, Durandan, Daoust, Laflamme, V. P. W. Dorion and Papin collaborating, "*L'Avenir*" had a brilliant if brief career, tilting fearlessly against every personage and every institution which stood in the path of young democracy, and if not converting the community as rapidly as had been hoped, at least giving its editors the joy of work and sacrifice and free expression. When, in January, 1852, scanty finances and the solid opposition of the clergy forced "*L'Avenir*" to discontinue, its place as the organ of the democratic Liberals was taken by the more sober and conventional "*Le Pays*," under the editorship of Louis Labrèche-Viger and L. A. Dessaulles. Finally, a

<sup>1</sup>"A rallying point for the young men of Montreal, an arena of competition, where every young man making his entry into the world could come and be inspired with pure patriotism, improve his mind by making use of the advantages of a common library, and become accustomed to speaking by taking part in the debating open to all sorts and conditions of men."—"*L'Annuaire de l'Institut*," 1852.

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political party took shape, and found representation in parliament. In the election of 1851, five Rouges were returned, and in 1854 nearly twenty. After Papineau retired, A. A. Dorion became their leader.

The situation presented by the union of the two provinces, the break-up of the old parties and the rise of new groups, afforded an admirable opportunity to a master strategist. In each section of the province there was found a centre party of moderate Liberals, with a radical and a conservative wing in each case. Early in the fifties George Brown believed it would be possible to unite all the Upper Canada factions on a platform of resistance to French-Canadian and priestly domination, but a greater strategist than Brown was at work. John A. Macdonald, realizing the essentially conservative character of the French-Canadians, sought to form a coalition of the moderate Liberals in both provinces with what was left of the Conservative or Tory parties. Joining forces with George Etienne Cartier, the most vigorous personality among the Lower Canada members, he succeeded in forming an enduring coalition which eventually fused into a coherent party. In Upper Canada it retained for the next two generations a name which betokened its origin, the Liberal-Conservative party, but in Lower Canada "Liberal" faded out of name and policy, and this wing was frankly known as the Conservative party, or, in contrast to the "Rouges," as the "Bleus."

Perforce the radical parties in the two sections of the province, thus left in opposition, stood together. They shared in common many tendencies in political and

economic policy, but during the Union period they never united as closely as their rivals. It is perhaps easier for defenders of the *status quo* to hold together enduringly than for reformers who differ as to what corner of the old structure should be overturned first. In any case, the fact that the demand for doing away with Lower Canada's equality of representation in parliament and opposition to "French and priestly domination" soon became the chief planks in the platform of Brown and the Upper Canada Reformers, made it very difficult for a Lower Canada party to work with them and impossible for it, if it did, to attain a majority in its own section.

For ten years after its formation in 1854, the Liberal-Conservative party retained power, except for two brief intervals. Yet as the years advanced, its margin of power vanished. Brown had not been able to unite the parties of Upper Canada under his own leadership, but he came near to uniting the electors of Upper Canada. The Reformers won seat after seat in the West, leaving Macdonald in a hopeless minority in his own section, more and more dependent upon the solid cohorts which followed his colleague, Cartier. At last the two parties, and, what was more serious, the two sections of the province, stood deadlocked. Neither could attain a secure or adequate majority, and the personal bitterness and intrigue, the wide-spread corruption, and the naked sectional controversy which resulted, made a change imperative. The Union experiment had, indeed, greatly improved the situation that existed in 1837, thanks to the solvent power of liberty, but it had not secured complete success. The relations between the colony and the

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mother country and between the two races in Canada itself had bettered, but neither the harmonizing of East and West nor the stability of parties which were essential for its success had been attained. A real federation, which would give each section control of the matters most closely affecting it and yet retain common action in affairs of common interest, became inevitable.

The issue of Confederation had not originally been a party matter. Its first effective advocate had been one of the Liberal-Conservative leaders, A. T. Galt, but Macdonald himself always opposed a wider union except on the unattainable and unworkable basis of legislative or organic union, and voted against a federation motion a few hours before the fall of his government in 1864 opened his eyes to the need of changed tactics, if the province was to be saved from futile wrangling and his government kept in power. On the other hand, the Rouges, who had been the first party to propose, in 1856, a solution of the difficulties of the time by making Canada a federation of two distinct provinces, opposed a union of all the British North American provinces in which Lower Canada would be overwhelmed. The outcome of the forcing of the Confederation issue, so far as party fortunes were concerned, was a further strengthening of the Liberal-Conservative ranks. Brown and the majority of his followers joined Macdonald, Cartier and Galt in a coalition to carry Confederation, while the Rouges, with a few Canada West Reformers such as Malcolm Cameron and Sandfield Macdonald, and a few Conservatives such as Hillyard Cameron in the West and Christopher Dunkin in the

East, took up the same attitude of opposition which Joseph Howe maintained with more support in Nova Scotia. The coalition did not prove lasting; before Confederation was enacted Brown was out of the cabinet in which he found himself far from master, and though a few Liberal leaders from each province joined forces with Macdonald, they carried with them little popular support and soon faded into the Conservative party. Confederation began with a Conservative or Liberal-Conservative government firmly entrenched in the administration not only of the new Dominion, but of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, into which the old province of Canada had been divided.

It was not, then, from any desire to float with the tide that Wilfrid Laurier became an active member of the Liberal or Rouge party of Canada East. Nor was it from any temperamental sympathy with the extreme views and tendencies which had marked that party at its beginning. Laurier, like Dorion, was ever more of the Whig than of the Radical, moderate, judicial, respectful of precedent, aware of the difficulty of effecting sudden reforms that would be lasting. Yet Dorion and Laurier were in turn leaders of this most aggressively democratic party. The paradox is only seeming. Both men joined the party in their teens, when they had their share of youth's boundless hopes and sweeping judgments, and both in later years guided their followers into more moderate ways. And particularly when Wilfrid Laurier became a member, the party had thrown overboard most of its youthful indiscretions—though kind friends always insisted on en-



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deavouring to restore the abandoned political baggage. They had ceased to attack the priest's tithe or to call for annual parliaments or elective governors, and the annexationist sympathies they had shared with Montreal Tories had faded away under the influence of the prosperity reciprocity helped to ensure, and observation of the troubles which slavery and the struggle as to States' rights were bringing upon the republic. But there remained a solid core of doctrine with which Laurier, like Dorion, was deeply and vehemently in sympathy. A passion for individual freedom and constitutional liberty, an abiding faith in the power of the people to work out their own salvation, were the moving forces of their political activity throughout the careers of both men, and made it inevitable that they would align themselves with the party which, whatever its vagaries, did stand clearly for the fundamentals of liberalism.

Political ideals, forms of government, parties and party traditions, were not the only political inheritance which Confederated Canada received from the Canada of the Union era. The racial issue, the problem of contending nationalities, was an inescapable heritage, shaping and conditioning political activity at every turn. Canada had its full share of the nineteenth-century surge of racial and nationalist feeling, and of the problems of adjustment which it involved.

The fundamental fact in the political life of Canada was the existence side by side of two peoples differing in creed, in speech, in blood and in all the traditions

that make up national consciousness. With the Conquest, as has been seen, Britain's first policy was that of out-and-out assimilation. The policy might have succeeded. In the eighteenth century the fires of nationalism had not begun to flare. The ordained leaders of the people had largely returned to France. The habitant had little love and less regret for the corrupt and oppressive administration which had marked the last years of the French régime. A substantial measure of success was attained in the first dozen years of British rule, in breaking down the allegiance of the people to the laws, the seigniorial ordering of society, and, according to Masères, even to the Church and the other institutions which sheltered and preserved racial consciousness. But suddenly the old policy was reversed, and Carleton's plan of confirming and isolating French-Canadian nationalism as a barrier against the tide of democracy and rebellion setting in from the south was put into force.

After the Revolution, the situation changed once more, and with it changed British policy. The old colonies had now seceded; there was no further occasion to shape a policy for their retention. The St. Lawrence valley, resigned under Carleton's plan as a permanent home for French-speaking colonists, now became, with Nova Scotia, the only outlet on the continent for English-speaking citizens who wished to remain under the British flag. Loyalists from the United States, and, later, British immigrants from overseas, poured in by tens of thousands, and forced the granting of a measure of self-government. The British government was still

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prepared to stand by the bargain made with the French-Canadians in the Quebec Act, their Magna Charta, and when the Constitutional Act was passed in 1791 Grenville magnanimously and modestly affirmed the intention to "continue to the French inhabitants the enjoyment of those civil and religious rights which have been secured to them by the capitulation of the Province, or have since been granted by the liberal and enlightened spirit of the British Government." But soon a change came. The memory of 1774 gradually faded, the English-speaking minority in Lower Canada became more insistent, and above all, the wars with Napoleon made France and democracy anathema in England. When the French-Canadian representatives in the Assembly, quickly learning the possibilities of their half-measure of liberty, demanded full self-government, they were met with blank refusal. After years of petition and inquiry and debate, British statesmanship could rise no further than the imperious insistence of Russell in 1837, backed by an almost unanimous parliament, that neither responsible government nor an elective legislative council could be permitted in a colony, and his action in authorizing the governor to take needed funds out of the provincial treasury without the Assembly's consent. Rebellion followed; the Assembly was suspended; a second rebellion broke out, again to be put down.

Writing in the calm retrospect of two generations later, Mr. Laurier thus summed up the struggle:

The struggle thus begun continued throughout the fifty years that the constitution of 1791 endured. Pitt had ex-

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pressed the hope that the majority would govern. During the fifty years that the constitution of 1791 was in force, the real government of the country was exercised by the English minority in despite of the French majority. During the fifty years of the constitution of 1791, the Assembly struggled and struggled in vain to secure the most elementary powers of a representative body. The right to choose its president freely was vigorously contested; the right to protect its independence was long disputed; the right to control public expenditure was constantly refused. Each claim that it made, each remonstrance against an abuse, each insistence on an unrecognized right, each assertion of a principle which had been violated, was the occasion, in the body of the Assembly, of bitter struggles with the minority, followed by violent conflicts with the oligarchy. As soon as the decision of the Assembly was rejected by the Council, the session would be suddenly prorogued in the dissenting chamber, by the governor, acting at the instigation of his officials.

The struggles of the Assembly each day extended farther among the different sections of the people.

The inhabitants of the Anglo-Saxon race, who everywhere else would have taken the initiative in the reforms demanded by the Assembly, formed an alliance with the oligarchy, which became closer each day. They persuaded themselves, and each day were more convinced, that the principles insisted upon by the Assembly hid so many thoughts of treason. Their anxious devotion to the Crown made them believe that the least authority conceded to the Assembly would be employed by it to further the independence of the colony. They did not suspect that by fear of rebellion, they themselves were provoking rebellion.

All the men of Anglo-Saxon birth in the province formed before long a compact group, from the governor to the least of the sailors whom the hazards of an adventurous life had brought to the port of Quebec.

National feeling was equally stirred up among the French population. The cause of the Assembly became the cause of the entire race. The principles that it affirmed, the rights

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that it insisted upon, the whole race affirmed and insisted upon with an emotion that was at the same time enthusiasm and anger. These principles and these rights were in fact synonymous with the preservation of the French race.

Scorn, hostility and hate developed, deepened, became ever more and more intense; conflicts between the Assembly and the Executive grew more and more frequent, and each conflict was reflected with an ever-increasing intensity in each element of the population. When rebellion broke out, although there were found Canadians on the side of the English and English among the Canadians, the rebellion was the explosion of racial hate.

The rebellion forced attention and a measure of concession to the demand for self-government. It did not advance the cause of French-Canadian nationalism. On the contrary, advantage was taken of the suspension of the Assembly and the discrediting of the Patriote cause to revert once more fully and frankly to the policy of anglicizing the whole province. The more extreme leaders of the English minority called for the permanent disenfranchisement of the French-Canadians. Lord Durham was equally insistent as to the end, if somewhat more moderate as to the means. There could be no peace, he insisted, while the two nationalities stood opposed. There could be no question that in the long run the progressive, enterprising, numerous English-speaking people would dominate all North America, and that the French-Canadian people, hopelessly inferior in wealth and culture and numbers, "a people with no history and no literature," would be absorbed, to their own good. Therefore, the sooner the better. It must "be the first and steady purpose of the British govern-

ment to establish an English population, with English laws and language, in this Province, and to trust its government to none but a decidedly English legislature"; the "nationality of the French-Canadians" must be "obliterated."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Laurier condemns Durham's policy and defends his character; incidentally he explains, in a passage remarkable equally for its insight and its detachment, the influence of the struggle of the French-Canadians to preserve their nationality, upon their material fortunes:

The man who used this harsh language was not an enemy of the race whose annihilation he thus advised. Neither was he one of those unbending spirits who reckon human life and all that may make it precious as of small account, when the attaining of a desired result is at stake. The name of Lord Durham has always been held in execration among French-Canadians since the day when the sentence he had delivered upon their national existence was made known. They believed then

<sup>1</sup> Durham's prescription erred, but his diagnosis was acute. In a secret and confidential despatch to Lord Glenelg on August 9, 1838, recently deposited in the Canadian Archives, he is frank in his discussion of the real issues behind the constitutional struggle and the rebellion: "The truth is that, with exceptions which tend to prove the rule, all the British are on one side and all the Canadians are on the other. . . . It appears upon a careful review of the political struggle between those who have termed themselves the loyal party and the popular party, that the subject of dissension has been, not the connection with England, nor the form of the constitution, nor any of the political abuses which have affected all classes of the people, but simply such institutions, laws and customs as are of French origin, which the British have sought to overthrow and the Canadians have struggled to preserve. . . . The consequent rebellion, although precipitated by the British from an instinctive sense of the danger of allowing the Canadians full time for preparation, could not, perhaps, have been avoided. . . . Their [the British inhabitants'] main object . . . has been . . . to substitute, in short, for Canadian institutions, laws and practices, others of a British character. In this pursuit they have necessarily disregarded the implied, not to say precise, engagement of England, to respect the peculiar institutions of French Canada."

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that Her Majesty's High Commissioner was narrow-minded, and that he had sacrificed the sentiments of justice to race prejudice. This impression, caused by the painful emotion that the publication of his report produced, has not been removed. Nothing, however, is further opposed to the truth; impartial history must give a different verdict. Lord Durham was generous, a man of supremely liberal spirit. A disciple of Fox, he had like him an innate sympathy for the cause of the weak and the oppressed. He had been one of the champions of the emancipation of the Catholics. He had been one of the authors of electoral reform, and had striven for its accomplishment rather with the passion of an apostle than the calm resolution of a statesman. He was one of the most ardent in that ardent school of reformers who, after the Napoleonic wars, undertook to root out of the soil of old England the laws of privilege and caste, and to put within reach of the poorest classes, the benefits of civilization and liberty.

It may seem strange that a man of these opinions should in cold blood have counselled the annihilation among a whole people of all that it held most dear. Lord Durham himself has given the explanation, by setting forth deductions which events have fortunately disproved, but whose logic at the time it seemed hardly possible to dispute. To his mind it was impossible that the two races could live in harmony on the same soil. Until one or the other should have disappeared, all hope of peace was an illusion, and since either one or the other had to disappear, the lot had to fall on the weaker, on the French race. Lord Durham devoted the greater part of his report to discussing this question, which he examined from every angle, and which he solved precisely, fundamentally, like a problem in mathematics. If he advised the British government not to hesitate to sacrifice the French race, it was not out of hostility to that race, of which he spoke in sympathetic terms; it was because such was the fatal decree of necessity.

Lord Durham indicated the means with no less precision: namely, to overwhelm the French population in an English majority. But as the population of British origin was less numerous than the French population, within the limits of

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Lower Canada, the quickest and most effective policy was to join the province of Upper Canada and that of Lower Canada under the same government, and by uniting the total number of the British population of Upper Canada with the British minority of Lower Canada, to form in the united Canada a majority of the English element against the French element.

As to the effect of this form of government on the French population, he considered that it would facilitate the realization of the homicidal idea he set forth as indispensable to the peace of the colony. He calculated that the French race would be reduced to powerlessness by "the vigorous arm of a popular legislature"; that everything that constituted its autonomy would disappear slowly but surely, simply by the force of the majority, unless it itself entered resolutely on the path of absorption in order to have its legitimate part in the new state of things. At bottom, Lord Durham's policy did not differ from the policy of the oligarchy. It differed only in means. He did not propose to molest the French race or to take away its autonomy by force. He did not propose to take away its political rights. He proposed to place it in a position numerically inferior and to make the exercise of its political rights of no avail. His plan was to have it governed legally by a majority just as it had previously been governed illegally by a minority, to substitute legal tyranny for illegal tyranny, and to force the French-Canadians, if they wished to escape from it, to renounce their national character.

There is nothing in Lord Durham's report to show that he ever, even once, dreamed what cruelty his policy involved. Rather, this idea which to us appears cruel, reveals his philanthropic character. Taking his stand on purely utilitarian grounds, he persuaded himself that the obvious interests of the French race demanded its extinction. It is not extermination that he advises, it is progressive, systematic absorption of one element into another. In remaining what it is, the French race must become more and more isolated on the American continent, and consequently fall into a state of material and moral inferiority; absorbed into the British element, it takes its place in the advancement, the wealth, the high degree of civilization



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that the numerical preponderance of this great race assures it on the continent.

These considerations, in the eyes of a humanitarian like Lord Durham might appear decisive, but could a patriot like Lord Durham forget how they would wound the self-respect of a proud people?

The reflection that the preservation of the national individuality of the French-Canadians exposed them to being out-distanced perhaps did not lack truth.

It cannot be denied that the French-Canadians, in the preservation of their national existence, have absorbed a fund of activity, energy, and force, which the rival races, free from this preoccupation, have utilized for their material advancement. But such was the pride of the French people that they wished to remain what they were. Since the Conquest every other consideration had been subordinated to this. They had pride in their origin, in their traditions, history, and individuality, and the efforts, the struggles and the sacrifices that this sentiment had cost them should have been sufficient to inspire in a generous soul, a higher thought than regard simply for their material existence.

But Lord Durham, although a friend of liberty, did not realize its full power.

Sydenham and his backers in London and Canada, blind as Durham himself to the powers of resistance inherent in nationalism, tried to carry this policy into force. Union was enacted to give an English-speaking majority in the new province. All official electoral and parliamentary proceedings were to be in English. Though Lower Canada far outnumbered Upper Canada, it was given only the same number of representatives in the provincial assembly. When the elections were held, Sydenham exhausted all the efforts of official pressure, corruption and violence to prevent the French-

Canadian electorate securing a fair proportion of the seats assigned to Lower Canada, and endeavoured to ignore altogether such French-Canadian members as were elected. Mr. Laurier declares:

It was the imposition of the will of the stronger—the *væ victis*. The French race had to disappear; it must be gradually swallowed up, buried in quicksand, without commotion, without violence, but by the regular, normal, inflexible, irresistible action of an external and ever-increasing majority.

The French-Canadians made vain appeals to the generosity, to the justice of the mother country. At the same time they tried all the constitutional methods that the suspension of the constitution left at their disposal: protests, petitions, resolutions adopted in public assemblies. These useless appeals, which remained unanswered, finally exasperated the people. Perhaps never had the British domination been more detested than at this time. The bloody vengeance visited upon the insurgents, the countrysides laid waste by fire, the pitiless executions, the deportations by the hundred, did not show so much cruelty, in the eyes of the vanquished, helpless people, as the cold-blooded determination to take away from it the national character that was its whole pride.

The programme of Durham and Sydenham and their backers in the English-speaking minority, on its racial side, proved a complete failure:

Union and liberty produced all the good that Lord Durham expected, without realizing the evil that he had foreseen in it.

The new institutions were found to be broad enough for the two races who had been enemies to live and grow together without fusion and without friction.

The French-Canadian people, disheartened for the moment, soon rallied. Under LaFontaine they found a determined and skilful leader. Their representatives

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in parliament held together, for the first few years, in a solid block. The efforts of governors and ministers to detach a few of their leading men proved unavailing; any individual who stood out from his people committed political suicide. Soon these tactics forced concessions in a parliament of divided parties. In 1844 a unanimous resolution passed the Assembly advocating the recognition of French as an official language, and four years later the British parliament assented. The year 1849 saw the establishment in office of a strong administration with a French-Canadian premier, and the passing of a measure to recompense those who had suffered loss in the rebellion, barring only men convicted in court of open rebellion. The English-speaking minority protested vigorously, the more irresponsible element burning the parliament buildings and stoning the governor-general for assenting to such a measure, the more substantial leaders turning to annexation, determined, as Durham had prophesied, to remain "English, at the expense, if necessary, of not being British." But the protest was in vain: the policy of ascendancy and of anglicization had failed.

At this point a divergence appeared in the ranks of the French-Canadians. Papineau wished to undo the wrong of coerced union, to revert to the isolation of the Lower Canada of his earlier days. LaFontaine abandoned the demand for repeal of the Union and insisted that the legitimate aspirations of French-Canadians could be satisfied under the existing constitution: the Union must be judged not by the purposes of its

founders but by the achievements of those who actually administered it. The Rouges' adoption of Papineau's insistence on an extreme and isolated nationalism was curiously tempered by the actual co-operation with the English-speaking Tories of Montreal and the Eastern Townships, and by the potential relations with the English-speaking people across the border, which their temporary conversion to the policy of annexation involved. It was significant that after the rise of the annexation movement "L'Avenir" dropped from its programme the clause which had previously headed the list, *Canadien-français avant tout*.

The alliance of Baldwin and LaFontaine and later of Macdonald and Cartier, and the common interest in railway development and general economic expansion counted for much in bringing the two races together. Yet there remained two seemingly insuperable obstacles to harmony—the system of government and the colonial status.

So long as every detail regarding either section of the province had to be dealt with by a house containing an equal number of representatives from the other section, friction, and cries of unwarranted interference, of "French domination" or of "English tyranny" were certain to arise. Only by a federal solution could the most contentious issues be assigned to local legislatures and united action still secured in matters of joint concern.

So long, again, as Canada remained a subordinate and dependent colony, it was hopeless to expect any

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solution of the racial issue. The people as yet considered themselves English, Irish, Scotch, French, or at most "Canadien" or French-Canadian, not Canadians. The English-speaking peoples in Canada, by their kinship with the dominant power overseas, were in a different political position from their French-speaking compatriots. To the majority of the English-speaking peoples the old country was still "home." This was not true in the case of the French-Canadians. They were longer rooted in the soil. Even under the French régime, it has been seen, fresh immigration was extraordinarily scanty. After the Conquest immigration from France ceased wholly. The ties were not year by year renewed. Still more effective in breaking off all connection was the growth of revolutionary and anti-clerical sentiment in France. The revolution of '93 had created a great gulf between old France and New France. The Canadian clergy sought to keep their flock free from the slightest contact with a people who scorned all legitimate authority or bowed to upstart dictators. The British government and the Roman Catholic Church, each for its own ends, did their best for generations to hold Canada aloof, and it was not surprising that they succeeded. Such sympathy with France as survived was naturally more common in radical than in conservative circles, but except in the outburst of democratic fervour of the late forties, when Papineau linked Paris and Montreal together, here also it was a weak and transient force.<sup>1</sup> The habitant had

<sup>1</sup> The viewpoint of the young Rouges in their halcyon days is brought

ceased to be French; he had not become English; he was *Canadien*.

When Wilfrid Laurier entered politics, the issue of nationalism had again been brought to the front by the discussion of Confederation. His Rouge friends were opposing Confederation on the ground that it would mean the overwhelming of the French-Canadians in an English-speaking mass—and on other grounds, of which not the least important was that their political rivals were supporting it. Durham had failed to obliterate French-Canadian nationality by uniting another province with Lower Canada; now Brown and Macdonald and Cartier and Galt were proposing the experiment of uniting five English-speaking provinces with the one French-speaking section. Cartier and his friends, on the other hand, insisted that by restoring a separate legislature to Lower Canada, a legislature which would have control over all the matters of intimate concern, they were immensely strengthening the French-Canadian position. Laurier did not at first disassociate himself from these sectional views. In “*Le Défricheur*” he echoed the criticism, which had no small measure of truth, that Brown desired Confederation as a means of

out in this eloquent apostrophe of V. P. W. Dorion at a banquet given to the collaborators of “*L’Avenir*,” August 26, 1848, in proposing the toast, *le peuple Canadien*: “. . . France, our ungrateful mother, yet whom we always love in spite of the wrong she has done us, because it is she who cared for us in our childhood, it is from her we drew the strength needed to cross the ocean of difficulties which beset our childhood’s path, it is she who fed us with the bread of wit and civilization, who taught us to pray God according to our holy and beautiful religion, who taught us to lisp the beloved tongue our fathers bequeathed to us and which we hold dearer than life.”

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lessening French-Canadian power, and that the Conservatives, facing defeat in 1864, had conceded his demand as the price of retaining office. Lower Canada had no more interest in Nova Scotia than in Australia; the only tie that bound them was subjection to the common colonial yoke. Confederation would prove the tomb of the French race.

It was not long before his views had widened. The influence of his early associations in New Glasgow, the intercourse with the Scotch and English settlers in the Townships, his constant browsing in the classics of English Liberalism, kindled his sympathies with his English-speaking compatriots. His sympathy with his own people never lessened, but he came to see that their future lay not in isolation, nor, for that matter, in assimilation, but in full and frank partnership with their fellow-Canadians.

Unlike Howe, Dorion and Laurier accepted Confederation, once accomplished, as an established fact. Very early Wilfrid Laurier came to see the possibilities it involved of solving the racial problem. From the outset of his parliamentary career, two principles guided his conduct in the endeavour which was always nearest his heart, to achieve union and harmony for all Canada. The first was to adhere faithfully to the guarantees of the federation compact, to refrain from federal interference with provincial affairs, to respect the safeguards thrown around the rights and privileges of the minorities within each province. The other was to develop a common unhyphenated Canadian nationality, in which

the older loyalties would be fused and blended, not compelling any man to forget the land of his fathers, but bringing all to put first the land of their sons. To quote one last word from his survey of the Union period:

The sentiment of nationality was thus made secure. The ideal of each race was henceforth the progress of the common country, and the supreme pride of both, to proclaim themselves above all Canadian.

In the early years of Wilfrid Laurier's career, a third issue divided interest with the reorganization of parties and the conflict of nationalities. The question of the relations of Church and State had its roots both in local conditions and in the European struggle between liberalism and ultramontism. In nineteenth-century Europe no country escaped violent controversy on this issue. In Canada, the close connection between Church and State which had existed from the beginning of the French régime, and the complications introduced by the sudden change of control at the Conquest, made the issue one of vital importance during both the Union and the Confederation period. There was no question with which Wilfrid Laurier was more intimately concerned from his first to his last day in public life, and none on which he impressed more enduringly the stamp alike of his courage and of his moderation.

Upper Canada was fortunate in solving the most serious of its ecclesiastical conflicts relatively early. With the first organization of the province there had begun the endeavour to establish and endow the Church of England as a safeguard for faith and morals and a but-





LOUIS JOSEPH PAPINEAU  
Tribune of Lower Canada  
(1832)



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tress of state authority. The proposals met with little opposition so long as the Anglicans formed the great majority of the population. With the coming in large numbers of Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Roman Catholic settlers, the inevitable conflict began. The claims of the Church of England to receive as endowment vast areas of Clergy Reserves or Crown Lands, to monopolize the performance of the marriage ceremony, and to control university education, were fought with vigour and eventual success. The winning of self-government, and the growth of the dissentient denominations to an overwhelming majority in their turn, led to the speedy triumph of the forces which opposed any union of Church and State. The appropriation in 1854 of the unallotted Clergy Reserves for educational purposes marked the end of the dream of church establishment. The question revived in a new form with the setting up of Roman Catholic separate or denominational schools. For twenty years the controversy waged. The provincial Acts of 1855 and 1863 accorded the Roman Catholics the right to establish separate schools, controlled by local boards of their own faith, subject to the supervision of the provincial department of education as to curriculum, teachers' qualifications, and administration, and maintained by provincial grants and by local assessments on their supporters, who were exempted from taxes for maintenance of public schools. These concessions were bitterly fought by George Brown and his cohorts, but after 1863 the principle was definitely recognized and the issue of Church

and State, while never wholly quiescent, receded into the background.

Lower Canada could not so easily escape its difficulties. The difference in religion between the vast majority of its people and the people not only of the United Kingdom but of the greater part of British North America, the breaking of relations with France, the continuance and eventually the closer welding of relations with Rome and the consequent echoing of the controversies which divided Catholic Europe, all made a situation full of difficulty for the statesman and often for the private citizen.

Under the French régime the Church was a potent force. It could not be otherwise in a colony which for many a year was mainly a mission station and in which religious zeal throughout supplied a great part of the driving power. The Church provided and controlled school and hospital and refuge. It built up great territorial endowments: by the end of the French régime the Church owned the same proportion of the granted land of New France as of the land of old France—one-fourth of the whole. The bishop shared control with governor and intendant. Mgr. Laval made and unmade governors and exalted the authority of Rome at the expense of that of the court of France. Yet in the later years its political if not its social power declined. The missionary motive faded. Frontenac fought bishop and Jesuit, rightly and wrongly, with success and with failure, but always with vigour, and after his day the superior power of the state authorities was

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scarcely questioned. The ecclesiastical law of France and the Gallican liberties, setting bounds to papal intervention in the affairs of the national church, held sway in the colony, though the great Gallican charter of 1682 was never formally registered in New France.

Then came the conquest of Canada by a power militantly Protestant. The overthrow of the Roman Catholic Church appeared inevitable. The British authorities, it is true, promised freedom of worship, but with the saving qualification, "as far as the laws of Great Britain permit." While permitting the people to worship at what altar they pleased, they endeavoured in every way to subordinate the Church to the State's authority, to refuse formal recognition to the bishop, to reserve to the King the right of nominating parish priests, to break up the male clerical orders—particularly the Society of Jesus, which the Pope himself suppressed in 1773—to require permission from the governor before entering such order, to bar all but native Canadians from ecclesiastical office, and to throw open the churches for Anglican as well as for Catholic use. The Church of England was to take its place as the established body, as fast as governor and schoolmaster and parson could bring the people to the new way of thinking.

The policy proved an utter failure. Before two generations had passed, the Catholic Church in Canada had not only struck off the new shackles imposed on its freedom of action but had become more independent and more powerful under the British than it had been under the French régime.

One reason for the failure was that the policy was pressed only intermittently. With more persistence and fitter tools it might have won a measure of success. Masères witnesses that in the first dozen years the paying of tithes to the clergy fell rapidly into disuse. But policy wavered, and the Protestant clergymen sent out were too few and too weak to make any impression. The people cleaved to their ancient faith, and their clergy became every year a greater power in the land.

The strength of the Church under alien rule had more than one source. First came the consideration that heretic rulers could not exercise the control over the Church which His Most Christian Majesty had exercised without running counter to every racial and religious conviction; when a French king disciplined a bishop it was a mere family quarrel; if an English king used half his sternness, the heather was afire. The Church, again, in the absence of other leaders, became the rallying-centre of nationalism, sheltering the people against the attempts made to assimilate them, and gaining strength from the people's enduring gratitude.

But it was not merely with the people that the Church gained influence. It speedily came to terms with the government. The British authorities, once convinced that their own church could not prevail, were prepared to avail themselves of the power which did exist as an even more stable bulwark. The leaders of the Church met them half-way. A king was a king; '93 created a gulf between old France and New France; the priesthood after 1763 became almost wholly native-born, and

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its national sentiment not French but French-Canadian. "Mgr. Briand," declared Mgr. Plessis, his successor in the bishopric of Quebec, in 1790, "had hardly seen the British arms placed over the gates of our city, before he perceived that God had transferred to England the dominion of the country; that with the change of possessors our duties had changed their direction . . . and that religion itself might gain by the change of government." In one emergency after another, when British rule was threatened by external attack or internal revolt, the Church gave its support to the throne, gave it gladly but not for naught. There was no vulgar bargaining between the honourable gentlemen who represented the King and the distinguished prelates who served the Church, but the safeguarding of British interests and the recognition of the Church's claims synchronized. In 1774 the Quebec Act confirmed the Church's power to levy tithes; in 1775 bishop and priest exhorted their flocks to stand by the government and flee the wiles of the invading Bastonnais. During the war between Britain and France, revolutionary and anti-clerical France, British victories were celebrated by Te Deums in the cathedral at Quebec and the ban against the admission of French priests was raised. In the war of 1812 Mgr. Plessis issued vigorous pastorals calling on the people to fight for their old country and their new flag; after the war his right to official recognition as Bishop of Quebec and to a seat on the Legislative Council was recognized and his stipend from the British government increased to £1000 a year. Before the

rebellion of 1837 Bishop Lartigue of Montreal issued a solemn mandement, quoting all that St. Peter and St. Paul had to say about fearing God and honouring the King and being subjected to the higher powers, and all that Gregory XVI had recently added "in condemnation of those who by schemes of sedition and revolt endeavour to shake allegiance to Princes and hurl them from their thrones"; the Act of Union of 1841 struck hard at the political and nationalist claims of the French-Canadians, but left the Church untouched.

The Church had now secured complete freedom. Not only was its worship untrammelled but its hierarchy was recognized, its property, except for the Jesuits' Estates, conserved, and its right of tithe given the force of law. The Fifth Council of the Church in 1850 formally proclaimed this freedom: "We rejoice to make the solemn declaration that in no country is the Church freer than in Canada," while the Archbishop of Quebec, Mgr. Baillargeon, a little later declared, "We know no country where religion enjoys so great liberty and exercises a wider influence." Nor was its power merely legal and external. It held sway in the hearts of the people. Its teachings comforted them in distress, its ceremonies kindled their imagination, and its pastors were their most trusted friends and counsellors.

Until after Union was effected there had been practically no dissension within the Church itself. After the Union, and particularly after the winning of responsible government, controversy was frequent and vigorous. Two wings of opinion fought for the mastery.



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The struggle took many forms—controversies among the leaders of the Church themselves, conflicts between a section of the clergy and a small but active section of the laity, and finally, the warring of political parties. Many of these controversies concern directly only the student of ecclesiastical history, but others had a wider range, and have become part of the history of the country, as they were part of the lives of its political chieftains.

The achievement of self-government itself hastened the rise of public controversy. Now that the freedom alike of the people and of the Church had been securely attained, there was less risk of internal dissension jeopardizing common ends. The triumph of democracy involved, further, a change of venue. When power lay with the governor and his circle, it was with the governor and his circle that bishops and vicars-general carried on their negotiations. When power came to rest with the people, the Church, in the New as in the Old World, naturally became vitally interested in the schools and the press that formed the electors' opinions, and in the parties and the elections through which their opinions found expression.

The personal factor was important. Men of a new temper came to power, or power and freedom brought out qualities hitherto repressed. The tradition of leaders such as Mgr. Briand, Mgr. Plessis, Mgr. Hubert, firm in upholding the rights of their church, untiring in advancing its interests, but ruling their own people with easy rein and broadly tolerant toward those

of other faiths, was continued by Mgr. Baillargeon, Archbishop of Quebec from 1867 to 1870, and his successor, Mgr. Taschereau, as well as the greater number of their colleagues. In Montreal the Sulpicians, the chief religious order, and in Quebec, Laval University and the Seminary, maintained the same tradition. But Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal from 1841 to 1876, and Mgr. Laflèche, his younger colleague in Three Rivers, were men of another mould, fiery crusaders, intolerant of difference, impatient of resistance, prepared to fight to the end rather than yield one jot or tittle of their authority or permit any slightest growth of independence among their flocks.

In still greater measure, the controversies which developed were manifestations of the world-wide conflict between authority and liberalism which had continued without ceasing since the French Revolution, or echoes of its European phases. It was not until after Confederation that the full effect of these European developments was felt in Canada, but during the Union period their bearing was shown both in party conflict and in private controversy. Improvements in travel and communication brought the isolated provinces on the St. Lawrence within the range of European influence, at the same time that the changes which have been surveyed within the country itself had prepared a freer field for the exercise of the new tendencies.

There had been in pre-Union days little attempt from within the ranks of the Church to question either its doctrines or its authority. Journals such as "Le Cana-

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dien" and "Le Libéral" which had made cautious steps in this direction had found little support and proved unable to withstand the solid opposition of the clergy. Papineau, it was true, had early imbibed the doctrines of eighteenth-century deism, but he never sought to weaken the faith of his countrymen and showed deep respect for the customs and the leaders of the Church. Toward the end of the separate existence of Lower Canada, he and those behind him were feeling their way to question the Church's control over education. "Le Canadien" in 1835 had criticized the training given in the colleges under ecclesiastical direction, as inadequate and impractical, failing to equip the French-Canadian to compete with his English-speaking rivals in business affairs, and had proposed that the Jesuits' Estates, confiscated by the Crown at the Conquest, should be utilized to establish under state control an education of more ample and practical scope. In the following year Papineau proposed in the assembly that the Jesuits' Estates be handed over by the imperial authorities for educational purposes: "These estates," he continued, "were granted exclusively for Catholics, for a French and Catholic posterity; from reasons of expediency and of justice, we are agreed that henceforth they should be available for the inhabitants of all races and all creeds, and, to avert jealousies, that theological studies should be excluded." The constitutional crisis soon drove these proposals from the stage, but they undoubtedly had a share, which has not been adequately recognized, in determining the hostile attitude of the

clergy to the radical reformers and to the rebellion into which they drifted or were driven. During the rebellion, more than one group of Patriotes issued manifestos protesting against the intervention of the clergy in political affairs and demanding that they should remain neutral in the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The publication, in 1845-58, of the work which still remains the outstanding contribution of French-speaking Canada to scholarship and literature, F. X. Garneau's "Histoire du Canada," not only stimulated a new intellectual interest among the young men of the forties, but gave their interest a questioning bias by its mingling of frank criticism with sincere appreciation in its record of the work of the Church. The return of Papineau from his years of exile in the France where the revolution of 1848 was incubating provided a personal link with the radicalism of the Seine. The new spirit found expression, as has been indicated previously, in the intellectual activities of L'Institut Canadien, the party organization of the Democrats or Rouges, and in the columns of "L'Avenir."<sup>1</sup>

The editors of "L'Avenir" declared in their opening manifesto that as Democrats by conviction and French-Canadians by birth, they were pained to think "that the electric currents of democracy which are to-day giv-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "La Minerve," 30 Oct., 13 Nov., 16 Nov., 1837.

<sup>1</sup> "It was in 1848 that the group of men imbued with the false and perverse principles termed 'the principles of '89,' appeared as a party in Canada, and it was at this time that, believing themselves strong enough to propagate and establish their doctrines and errors in our country, they founded the newspaper 'L'Avenir.'" Memoir of Mgr. Lafleche, 1881: cited in Savaète, "Vers l'Abîme," ii. 217.

ing new vigour to the civilized world, might be dissipated without effect here, for want of finding a conducting wire to the countries of the New World." It was mainly the literary heresies of Hugo and Lamartine and the political aspirations of the Democrats and Republicans of the Left which found entry by this route. Few references at first were made to religious affairs. Then in March, 1849, came word of the dethronement of the Pope as temporal sovereign and the proclamation of a short-lived republic in Rome. "L'Avenir" could not restrain its "enthusiasm over this glorious event," making it clear, however, that it was the fall of the Pope as king that was hailed, and that his spiritual authority was in no way weakened or attacked. Father Chiniquy, the apostle of temperance, fated later to desert the church of his fathers, took up the cudgels in defence of the temporal power, at first in good-tempered regret, later in strong denunciation. "L'Avenir" replied that long before the editorial on the fall of the temporal power, a notable part of the clergy had been waging war upon it purely because of opposition to its political views; that it respected the clergy and was profoundly grateful for their services to education, but that they should confine themselves to the sphere of morals and religion; that when they ventured into politics it had always been to oppose democracy, and to support constituted authority. Later it cited the similar treatment meted out to Thomas D'Arcy McGee when in his New York journal, "The Nation," he had also ventured to criticize the temporal power. Letters in its columns,

signed and unsigned, attacked churchly creeds and priestly conduct. In January, 1850, 'L'Avenir' began to question the tithes which the law authorized the clergy to levy, and added both "abolition of the tithing system" and "abolition of the Protestant Clergy Reserves" to its formal programme: "a poorer clergy would be a better clergy."

In November, 1849, "L'Avenir" proudly declared that it had survived "the most formidable, the best organized, the most powerful persecution which could exist in Canada, the persecution of the majority of the Catholic clergy"; that after a war to the death it counted more adherents and more subscribers than ever; that it could not be crushed as "Le Canadien" had been twenty years and "Le Libéral" a dozen years before; "Thank Heaven, those times are gone, the reign of persecutors draws to its end in America, and 'L'Avenir' will survive its paid detractors as it will the various privileged orders which have an interest in extinguishing the light in order to keep our people in darkness and ignorance." The rejoicing was premature; on January 21, 1852, Eric Dorion was forced to announce, in bitterly disappointed but still courageous and uncompromising terms, that subscribers had fallen away and the journal could not continue. Clearly Quebec had little sympathy for a critic of the Church. "Le Pays," which took the place of "L'Avenir" as the Rouge organ in Montreal, refrained from any attack on church creed or practice, confining itself to occasional protests against incursions of priests into politics, against "the crime of erecting the

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altar side by side with the hustings." "Le National," of Quebec, followed the same discreet path. The journals of wider influence, the leading Conservative organ, "La Minerve," and Cauchon's "Le Journal de Québec," were vigorously clerical in sympathies. The influence of '48 had faded. Not the Seine, but the Tiber, was to flow into the St. Lawrence.

The Rouge group in the House of Assembly in the fifties incurred the hostility of the clergy by their attitude on two questions—the powers of religious communities and the control of the schools. Nearly every session witnessed a contest over the incorporation of some ecclesiastical order or institution. The Clear Grits opposed incorporation on any terms; the Rouges usually supported the main proposals, but joined in questioning the right of such communities to hold in perpetuity lands of unlimited value.<sup>1</sup> Of more importance was the school question. The Rouges, after initiating and carrying to a successful conclusion their demands for the abolition of the seigniorial system and the establishment of an elective upper house, turned to the betterment of education as their main policy. They called for free elementary schools, liberally sustained by the provincial government, uniform in type, progressive in curriculum, and open to all children irrespective of re-

<sup>1</sup> "The Hon. M. de Boucherville understood perfectly the aim of the clergy in bringing some religious community here every year, when again and again he opposed in the House the granting of acts of incorporation to these communities. He realized how dangerous to the cause of liberty the accumulation of property in the hands of the clergy is, and his is the merit of having uttered the first cry of warning in parliament." Article in "L'Avenir," Jan. 18, 1850.

ligious belief. Papin's motion in 1855 summed up this policy: "To establish throughout the province a general and uniform system of free elementary education, maintained wholly at the cost of the State by means of a special fund created for that purpose; to make it possible to carry on this system in a just and effective manner, it will be necessary that all schools thus established should be open without discrimination to all children of school age, without exposing any, by the character of the teaching given, to having their religious beliefs or opinions assailed or injured in any manner." In presenting his motion this young Rouge declared: There can be no established religion, and if so, the state cannot in any fashion grant money for the teaching of any religious faith. The system of education in force hitherto has been far from satisfactory. What we need is a general system applicable to all sections of the province, which will bring about the disappearance of the prejudices of Catholics and Protestants alike. This was not practical politics in 1855: even in Upper Canada there were few supporters of uniform and free, to say nothing of secular, education. Action followed the other trend, of confirming and extending denominational control, where desired, and the Rouge demands were very soon consigned to the legislative lumber-room.

The criticisms of "L'Avenir" and the school and corporations programme of the Rouge party concerned the Church as a whole, and they could not complain if the overwhelming body of the clergy opposed their conduct.



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In the case of the Institut Canadien, however, the aggression came from the other side; the quarrel was a more limited and personal affair, and the attitude of the chief figure in the controversy, Bishop Bourget, was very far from being endorsed by all his episcopal colleagues.

The Institut Canadien, it has been seen, was a literary club, organized in Montreal in 1844 for the purpose of providing the library and reading-room facilities which were conspicuously lacking in French-speaking Canada, and a forum for discussion and debate. It met with instant and enthusiastic success. Similar institutes were organized throughout the province; that was the day, it will be remembered, when Mechanics' Institutes, public libraries, and popular lectures and lyceum courses were coming into popularity in English-speaking America. But their success was not long unclouded. The same group of young Montrealers who edited "L'Avenir" and organized the Rouge party led the debates and controlled the library and reading-room of the parent institute. It was not surprising that a section of the clergy came to look upon the institute with a very critical eye. The first hint of trouble came in 1850. Father Paul Chiniquy demanded that journals which opposed the Pope's temporal power, and particularly "The Witness" and a French Protestant and proselytizing paper, "Le Semeur," should be excluded from the reading-room; others sought to bar from membership all but French-Canadians. Both proposals were rejected, but a few members seceded, and

rival Instituts Nationaux were established throughout the province in the next two years under clerical auspices. Again, in 1852, when the Montreal institute sought to rent a building owned by the Seminary, permission was declined unless the offending newspapers were barred and the bishop's censorship of the library accepted. These terms were declined. The Quebec Institut Canadien proved more amenable; in 1852 it voted to exclude "L'Avenir"; a motion was made in the Montreal institute to retaliate in coin by excluding the ultra-clerical "Journal de Québec," but the proposal was overwhelmingly rejected as inconsistent with the liberty of discussion which was the issue at stake. The question smouldered until in 1858 the action of Bishop Bourget in condemning the institute for harbouring in its library dangerous and immoral books fanned it into flame. A section of the institute's members proposed to bow to his wishes by appointing a committee to ban all books to which objection was made. After a stormy debate, a declaration was adopted by a vote of 110 to 88 to the effect that the institute's library did not contain and never had contained a single immoral book; and that it had always been and still was capable of judging of the morality of its library and of conducting its administration without the intervention of outside influences. The minority at once seceded. Mgr. Bourget issued a pastoral condemning the majority for assuming to judge of the morality of their books, and for asserting that books which were on the Index Expurgatorius were not immoral. Unless they rescinded their

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action, no good Catholic could continue to belong to the institute, and its members became liable to excommunication.

When Wilfrid Laurier came to Montreal in 1860, the bishop and the institute were still at swords' points. The young student was not deterred by the fear of episcopal lightnings from joining the institute and taking an active part in its debates and its administration. He became a vice-president in 1865, and again the following year, retiring from office only on the eve of his departure for L'Avenir.<sup>1</sup>

In October, 1863, the institute endeavoured to heal the breach. On the motion of Dr. Coderre, a committee consisting of himself and of Messrs. Dessaulles, Laurier and Joseph Doutre was appointed to "consider means of settling the difficulties which have arisen between His Grace the Bishop of Montreal and the Institute." This committee secured an interview with Mgr. Bourget. They were received with cordial courtesy and unyielding opposition; nothing but complete submission would avail. Later Dr. Coderre and M. Dessaulles waited upon His Grace, and left with him a catalogue of the library, asking him to indicate those books which he

<sup>1</sup> Officers of L'Institut Canadien. May to November, 1866:

President: J. Emery-Coderre

First Vice-President: Wilfrid Laurier

Second Vice-President: C. Alphonse Geoffrion

Recording Secretary: Alphonse Lusignan

Assistant Recording-Secretary: Zotique Labrecque

Corresponding Secretary: Gonzalve Doutre

Treasurer: Peter Henry

Librarian: Nephthali Durand

Assistant Librarian: Godefroi Papineau

considered undesirable for general reading, undertaking to set these aside under lock and key, to be given to Catholic members of the institute only upon authorization of the president of the executive committee. Mgr. Bourget took the catalogue. Six months passed without response. Then M. Dessaulles sought an interview once more, only to be informed that while dangerous books had been found in the list, it was not considered that it would serve any useful purpose to indicate them. In March, 1864, in further token of the desire to avoid offense, the institute adopted a resolution declaring

That the constitution of the Institut Canadien, while it does not take into consideration the religious creed of any of its members, does not thereby imply the denial of any truth or religious authority, and allows the personal responsibilities and duties of its members as regards their relation with established modes of worship to be maintained without interference; that in order to set religious liberty as admitted in this institution above conflict of any sort and to protect it from any unpleasantness, it is essential to avoid carefully touching on or discussing any question which might wound the religious susceptibilities of any of the members of this society; in consequence it would be desirable that no reading or discussion should be capable of giving rise to any complaint in this respect.

In November, 1865, seventeen members of the institute decided to appeal to Cæsar. A petition was drawn up and despatched to the Sacred Congregation of the Index protesting against Bishop Bourget's condemnation, and asking for an answer to this question: "May a Catholic, without rendering himself liable to ecclesiastical censures, belong to a literary association

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some of whose members are Protestants, and which possesses books condemned by the Index, but which are neither obscene nor immoral?" His Grace, who was not one to rest quiet under attack, carried his case to Rome in person. When Wilfrid Laurier left Montreal and the institute late in 1866, no decision had come from His Holiness.

Meanwhile the institute continued its course. In 1867 we find the Rev. John Corder declaring in an address before the institute that it represented the Gallican ideal in its breadth and independence, as against the exclusiveness and domineering spirit of Ultramontanism. In the same year Hon. L. J. Papineau made one of his last public appearances before the institute, praising it for its defence of the right of free inquiry, endorsing the principles of '76 and '89, calling on young men of whatever creed or race to take part in the work of the institute, and assuring it the support of all enlightened citizens in its struggle against "these enemies of reason and of thought." A year later, two addresses were given which were still less acceptable. Horace Greeley came from New York in December, 1868, to tell his hearers that "for the man who is genuinely liberal in this century in which we live, there is but one country, the world; one religion, charity; one patriotism, to civilize and do good to all the family of mankind; for adversaries, tyranny, ignorance, superstition, and, in short, everything which oppresses or degrades." On the same night, Dessaulles urged the need of tolerance, sympathy, respect for the rights of others;

insisted that in a country of mixed religions there could be no harm in men of mature mind, who belonged to different churches, meeting on common ground in the pursuit of literature and of science; cited many good Catholic writers who preached the same doctrine, and attacked "the reactionaries who thirsted to stifle liberty of thought and to keep grown men in dishonouring tutelage." True, he continued, their library contained books which were upon the Index, but what university or parliamentary library did not contain more, since works of Hallam and Michelet, of Agassiz and Cuvier, of Cousin and Royer-Collard, of Chateaubriand and Lamartine, of Pascal and Montaigne, of Hugo and Goethe were on the prohibited list? All these addresses were published in the "Annuaire" or "Handbook" for 1868.

At last, in 1869, Rome spoke. The question submitted by the members of the institute in 1865 was not answered, but the "Annuaire" of 1868 was made the ground for condemnation. The Congregation of the Holy Office condemned as pernicious the doctrines taught in the "Annuaire," and forbade the faithful to belong to the institute so long as it taught such doctrines. A decree of the Congregation of the Index forbade any to publish, read or possess the "Annuaire." Bishop Bourget, in a pastoral letter sent from Rome, added the warning that if any person persisted in adhering to the institute or keeping the "Annuaire" in his possession, he would be deprived of the sacraments, "même à l'article de la mort." The institute met in

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September, 1869, and declared: "1. That the Institut Canadien, founded solely for literary and scientific purposes, teaches no doctrine of any kind, and carefully excludes all teaching of pernicious doctrines; 2. That the Catholic members of the Institut Canadien, having learned of the condemnation of the 'Annuaire' of 1868, by a decree of Rome's authority, declare that they submit purely and simply to this decree." Bishop Bourget was not content with this submission, which he declared was hypocritical and inadequate: "This act of submission forms part of the report of the committee unanimously approved by the members of the institute, in which there is set forth a resolution heretofore kept secret, establishing the principle of religious toleration, which was the chief ground for the condemnation of the institute." In face of such frank and implacable hostility, the institute dwindled away; prudence led the weak-kneed to resign and death in time carried away the stiff-necked.

The death in 1869 of one of the enduring members, Joseph Guibord, printer by trade, a man of upright character and a lifelong faithful Catholic, brought about the final stage in the long struggle. A priest had refused to give him the last rites of the Church unless he would withdraw; he declined, and died suddenly shortly afterwards. The curé in charge of the cemetery of Côte des Neiges therefore refused to grant his body ecclesiastical burial or to admit it within consecrated ground. His friends took up the challenge. While Joseph Guibord's body lay in a vault, Joseph Doutre

and Rodolphe Laflamme, on behalf of the widow, appealed to the courts, carried the case to the Privy Council of England, and secured a decision in 1874 that under the ecclesiastical law of New France, which had never recognized the authority of the decrees of the Congregation of the Index, Guibord did not lie under any valid censure which could warrant his exclusion from Christian burial. In September, 1875, Guibord's body was carried to the cemetery, only to be met by barred gates and angry mobs. Two months later, under military escort, and with injunctions from the clergy to the people to refrain from all resistance, Guibord was buried without religious rites in the consecrated ground, side by side with his wife, and the grave protected by cement and iron. Yet here again Bishop Bourget had the last word, formally proclaiming the ground in which the stubborn printer lay, interdicted and unconsecrated. One point was yielded; to no other member were the rites of the Church refused.

The passions roused by this unfortunate affair made the continuance of the institute impossible. Steadily the membership fell away, the books and journals were transferred to the Fraser Institute, a free public library, and the institute became but a name. Mgr. Bourget had triumphed.

Mr. Laurier had had no part in the later developments of the struggle, and had regretted the open cleavage and the bitter recriminations of the closing scenes. Yet he never regretted that he had stood for freedom in the days of his own membership in the institute.



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There have been few men in public life so little given to cherishing a grudge. A singular temperamental tolerance, resting in part on kindly sympathy, in part on a cynical refusal to expect too much from human nature, and an abiding understanding of the folly of vendettas in a political game wherein the adversaries of to-day might be the allies of to-morrow, made him ever slow in condemnation. But fifty years after he had ceased to be a member of the Institut Canadien, at the mention of Mgr. Bourget's name his long mobile upper lip would tighten, and his kindly eye grow stern as he voiced his judgment of the prelate whose interpretation of Christianity and their common Catholic faith differed so widely from his own.

Even after his removal from Montreal, Mr. Laurier met his share of episcopal censure. In leaving the diocese of Mgr. Bourget to go to the diocese of Mgr. Laflèche, he found he had exchanged the frying-pan for the fire. In addition to his law practice, he had undertaken to edit the weekly newspaper, "Le Défricheur," which Eric Dorion had founded to further his work of constructive colonization in the Eastern Townships. So far as the few copies of "Le Défricheur" which are still extant reveal, the new editor had little to say of the Church, if much of his political opponents. But in the rising temper of the ultramontane group it mattered little whether the provocation was little or great. Mgr. Laflèche put the journal under the ban. Curé after curé advised his parishioners to give up their subscriptions. Parishioner after parishioner declined to take

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the paper from the post, or shamefacedly sought the office and declared that as he feared to oppose his wife, who feared to oppose the curé, he would have to give it up. In six months "Le Défricheur" had gone the way of many a Liberal paper in Quebec before and after. Years later, when Mr. Laurier was on intimate terms with Father Suzor, the curé at Arthabaskaville, he asked what excuse there had been for crushing his effort. "Oh, we felt you were growing too powerful," was the reply. "And did you not consider that you were depriving an honest man of his livelihood, destroying the investment into which I had put all I could find or borrow?" A shrug, and the comforting suggestion that such temporal considerations were of little weight, were all the satisfaction Mr. Laurier could secure. It was not probable that in any case, with his law practice growing, he could have long continued to act as editor, but that did not lessen the weight of the blow at the time.

## CHAPTER III

### FIRST YEARS IN PARLIAMENT

Clients, Friends, and Books—Election to the Legislature—A Maiden Speech—Clerical Hostility—The European Background—The Catholic Programme of 1871—The Parti National Diversion—The Ultramontane Campaign in Quebec—The Appeal to the Courts—The Appeal to Rome—The Appeal to the Public—Laurier on Political Liberalism—The Victory of Moderation.

**F**OR thirty years Wilfrid Laurier made his home in the village of Arthabaskaville, or Arthabaska, as it was later sensibly abbreviated. The early years of his life in the Townships were years of quiet happiness, of successful work and pleasant leisure. Country air and the skilful care of the local physician, Dr. Poisson, soon brought back a measure of strength. Mr. Laurier's health never ceased to be a matter of concern. He was well past middle age before any insurance company would risk a policy on his life. Only an ordered and abstemious way of living kept the shadow averted.

On coming first to Arthabaska, Mr. Laurier formed a partnership with Mr. Crepeau, which proved of brief duration. He then joined forces with Mr. Edouard Richard, who is best known as the historian of the Acadians. When Mr. Richard was elected as member in the federal house for Megantic, and took up his residence in that constituency, Mr. Laurier, in 1874, asked Joseph Lavergne to join him. The partnership proved

both enduring and congenial, ending only when Mr. Lavergne, who had been member for Drummond-Arthabaska from 1887 to 1897, went on the bench in the latter year. Joseph Lavergne, it may be noted, was followed as member for the county by his brother Louis, whose appointment as senator in 1910 gave occasion for the fateful by-election of Drummond-Arthabaska.

The practice flourished. Both in the judicial seat and on circuit the services of young Laurier were greatly in demand. It was a litigious neighbourhood, and the partners frequently had more difficulty in inducing their clients to settle their disputes out of court than in finding suits to plead. The cases were not of great moment, a family quarrel over a will, a neighbour's line-fence dispute, a damage suit against a railway, but whether little or much was at stake, Mr. Laurier greatly enjoyed the grappling of minds, and the jousting in the courtroom. Fees were not high: it was ten years before his income rose to two thousand a year, and the largest income he ever enjoyed while in practice was five thousand; but in Arthabaska, and in the seventies and eighties, five thousand, or even two, was wealth unquestioned.

Law did not absorb all Mr. Laurier's time or interest. For a time he returned to journalism, acting as editor of "Le Journal d'Arthabaska," founded in 1872 by his friend Ernest Pacaud, later editor of the leading Liberal newspaper in Quebec, "L'Electeur." Even with this fresh duty, there was leisure for living in Arthabaska, and both the desire and the means to live. Al-

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though the town had only some three thousand people, it was a literary and artistic centre of no little moment. A community that produced jovial wits like his brother lawyer, Louis Edouard Pacaud, such poets as Adolphe Poisson and musicians as Romeo Poisson, and, later, sculptors like Philippe Hébert and painters like Suzor Côté, was vigorously alive: the great cities had not yet drained the countryside. An evening passed in talk and song or in a rubber of whist in such company was not soon forgotten. The woods and the hills about lured to many a quiet ramble, or to a hunt for partridge. The local militia offered another outlet. Mr. Laurier became ensign in 1868. His company was called out for service during the Fenian Raid of 1870, though it did not have an opportunity to share in the brief skirmishes on the Townships' borders.

But it was in his library that Mr. Laurier passed his happiest hours. He read widely in the literature and history of his own country and of the two countries from which Canada drew its inspiration. Garneau and Crémazie, Bossuet and Molière, Hugo and Lamartine, Burke and Sheridan and Fox, Macaulay and Bright, Shakespeare and Burns, Newman and Lamennais, were the companions of his evening hours. His father's connection with the seigniory of Peter Pangman, the North-West fur-trader, drew his interest to the Western field, and his shelves soon held many prized narratives of travel or fur-company feuds beyond the Great Lakes. The life and writings of Lincoln were another special interest. He had escaped being carried away by

the enthusiasm for the South which marked official circles and the larger cities in Canada during the Civil War, when Southern refugees swarmed in Montreal, and plotted border raids. He had pierced below caricature and calumny to the rugged strength of the Union leader, and held in highest honour his homespun wit, his shrewd judgment, his magnanimous patience. More than one shelf of his library was set apart for *Lincolniana*.

Writing in 1876 to James Young of Galt, Mr. Laurier refers to some of his reading in English history:

I am just finishing "Trevelyan's Life of Macaulay." Have you read it? It is a fine book. I greatly admired Macaulay as a writer and a public man, but I am delighted with the private man. I have immediately, upon finishing reading the "Life of Macaulay," begun to read anew his history, and am now concluding the fourth volume. The history of England has for a foreigner like myself a charm which, I am sure, it has not for one accustomed from his infancy to English ideas and traditions. As you follow in Macaulay's pages that constant struggle between liberty and despotism and the slow and steady progress and at last complete triumph of liberty, the student of French history is struck with amazement. This is the reason why I admire you so much, you Anglo-Saxons.

It was a little more than four years after Wilfrid Laurier had begun to practise in Arthabaska that the way opened into political life. The first provincial legislature had been dissolved, and the general elections for the new house were to be held in June and July, 1871. The counties of Drummond and Arthabaska had been represented for the previous four years by a Conservative, Edward Hemming, a Drummondville barrister. The Liberals of the two counties urged Mr.

Laurier to contest the seat. Though deeply interested in politics, and with a full share of a somewhat fastidious ambition, he hesitated on account of the precarious state of his health. Finally he undertook the contest, and though a series of painful hemorrhages hampered his campaign, the popularity he had built up among both the French-speaking and the English-speaking Canadians, and particularly the Scots, of the constituency, stood him in good stead. While the Liberals throughout the province returned only a third of the house, Mr. Laurier was triumphantly elected for Drummond-Arthabaska, by over one thousand majority.

In one of the few letters of this period which have been preserved, addressed to a class-mate of L'Assomption days, shortly after his victory, Mr. Laurier reveals a youthful impulsiveness and vagueness of ambition which disappeared or at least failed to come to the surface in later years:

*Wilfrid Laurier to Oscar Archambault.—(Translation)*

Arthabaska, July 23, 1871.

MY DEAR OSCAR:

How can I thank you for your good letter! Of all the many congratulations which have come to me, it is yours, and yours alone, that I looked for. Yours, I knew, would come from a friendly heart. My own heart leaped when I saw your writing and read the post-mark, "L'Assomption." At that word, my whole life, our whole life in college, our life as students, a whole world, passed before my eyes like a flash. In an instant I surveyed ten years of my life. How many memories, how many happenings, how many intimate thoughts, how many anxieties, how many hopes buried by the hand of time, surged up in my heart again as freshly as ten years ago. I

## LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER

said to myself then with what joy I would throw to the winds my deputy's seat if I could find myself back in that blessed time.

Yes, my friend, I am now a member of Parliament. I have scored a triumph, a real triumph; I have beaten the government, the gold of the government, the eloquence of the ministers; I have been carried through the portals with nothing to help me but popular sympathy. Yet, once more, I would sacrifice all that to find myself back at nineteen with my poverty, but with my hopes, with my illusions, with your friendship. There is in the depths of my heart an enduring regret which the hand of time does not efface; regret that we have not been able to realize the dreams of our youth, that we have not been able to carry on beyond the threshold of life that union of our career which we had planned so long. How many times do I find these thoughts in my head, these regrets in my heart; I say to myself: what's the use, what's the use of regretting what cannot be helped, what's the use of complaining of the implacable edicts of destiny, and yet the very instant afterward I find myself again dallying with the same thoughts, the same regrets.

Assuredly I ought to be perfectly happy. It would rest only with myself to be happy and I would be were it not for this regret. I do not know what you think about it, but for me it is a sorrow at every moment.

Like you, I regret that you have not been able to make your entrance into political life this year. We would have come together, we would have been able to work together, we would have tasted again something of the great days of yore. So far as this goes, however, that opportunity is not lost, it is merely postponed. At the next elections your turn will come; you will carry by assault that fine county of Assomption of Papin's which now lets itself be hypnotized by a wretched coterie. I know that that will be a hard struggle to fight, but the goal is worthy of your striving.

As for me, I have not the ambitious ideas with which you credit me. I am entering political life without any precon-



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ceived ideas, without seeking any personal advantage, I might say without desire, or, if I have any desire, it is that of making my ideas triumph. We are, it is true, in an era of transition, and there is a fair field for any one who will take the trouble to strike out his own path. I shall not take the trouble, even if I should raise against myself every prejudice in the Province of Quebec. My decision, however, has not yet been taken or my line of conduct decided. There was a time when I felt tremendously ambitious, but age has dissipated these dreams of adolescence; I am turning into a positivist.

Adieu, my dear Oscar, or rather au revoir. I suppose that I shall see you at Quebec this winter during the session. Accept my regards and those of my wife and please remember me to your family whose many kindnesses to me will never vanish from my memory.

Your friend,

W. LAURIER.

The Assembly met in Quebec, early in November. Its legislative tasks were not arduous. The provincial legislatures were still groping to ascertain the share of the field of activity which had fallen to them when the federal system was adopted in 1867. The Conservative administration in power was not aggressive. At its head since 1867 had been Hon. P. J. O. Chauveau. A precocious youth, a poet of fair workmanship, author of a novel of French Canada which all praised and few read, a glowing and somewhat flowery orator, M. Chauveau had been Superintendent of Education for Canada East for the twelve years preceding Confederation. When in 1867 Hon. J. E. Cauchon, the hard-hitting veteran of Union politics, failed to form a cabinet because of the unwillingness of Christopher Dunkin to serve under him, M. Chauveau was summoned to form

the first provincial administration. His cabinet comprised Gédéon Ouimet, J. O. Beaubien, Charles Boucher de Boucherville, Louis Archambault, George Irvine, and Christopher Dunkin, best known to fame as the most searching critic of Confederation, who was succeeded after 1869 by J. G. Robertson. Outside the cabinet, and aside from the three federal ministers, Cartier, Langevin and Robitaille, who also held seats in the provincial house, the ablest man on the government side was Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau. The ranks of the Opposition were thin, and the men of outstanding capacity and experience among them few. Henri Joly de Lotbinière, Luther Hamilton Holton, and Téléphore Fournier, all of whom held seats both at Ottawa and at Quebec, were men of first-rate capacity.

In this Assembly Mr. Laurier was not long in making his mark. His conspicuous success in the general election had drawn wide attention. His maiden speech, on the Reply to the Address, more than justified expectations. It was acclaimed with enthusiasm by his colleagues, and frankly recognized by his opponents in the House and in the press as marking the rise of a new force in provincial politics.

Mr. Laurier, as a member of the Opposition, was in duty bound to find the situation of the province less hopeful than the ministerial speakers had painted it. Yet he did not paint it wholly black. On the political and social side there was much to be thankful for. "Certainly," he declared, "the fact is one of which we can be justly proud, that so many different faces and so

many opposite creeds should find themselves gathered in this little corner of earth, and that our constitution should prove broad enough to leave them all plenty of elbow room, without friction or danger of collision, and with the fullest latitude to each to speak its own tongue, practise its own religion, retain its own customs and enjoy its equal share of liberty and of the light of the sun." He found two outstanding omissions in the government's programme so far as political questions were concerned. It had failed to bring in a bill to do away with the pernicious system of spreading elections out over weeks or months, thus permitting the government of the day to issue writs first for the seats it considered safe and to concentrate its influence later on the seats it considered in danger. It had failed, in spite of the premier's long study of educational affairs, to propose any improvements in the school system of the province.

But the government's greatest weakness, Mr. Laurier continued, was its failure on the industrial side, its unreadiness to grapple with the serious economic problems, the backward state of agriculture, the stagnation of industry, the steady outward flow of the young men and women of the province to the United States. With all the great resources of which so much was heard, the people were in the position of Tantalus, starving in sight of a sumptuous table. Doubtless the ministry were not alone responsible for this bleeding of the country's strength. Yet they might have sought to build up a national industry, to remove the humiliating confession that after three centuries the country was still un-

able to supply its own wants, to go back if need be to Papineau's policy: "We should buy nothing from the metropolis." The government should seek to bring in industrial immigrants, master mechanics and small capitalists, the master miners of Wales and the north of England, the mechanics of Alsace, the weavers of Flanders and the artisans of Germany, rather than endeavour to recruit solely agricultural immigration. The agricultural population of Quebec, he acutely insisted, would never be increased from outside: "Our climate is too severe and the development of our lands too costly and difficult. The children of the soil will not be deterred by these obstacles, but the stranger will simply pass through our territory and locate on the rich prairies of the West." The French-Canadians themselves should take on a more industrial character. "We are surrounded," he declared, "by a strong and vigorous race who are endowed with a devouring activity and have taken possession of the entire universe as their field of labour. As a French-Canadian, Sir, I am pained to see my people eternally excelled by our fellow-countrymen of British origin. We must frankly acknowledge that down to the present we have been left behind in the race. We can admit this and admit it without shame, because the fact is explained by purely political reasons which denote no inferiority on our part. After the Conquest, the French-Canadians, desirous of maintaining their national inheritance intact, fell back upon themselves, and kept up no relations with the outside world. The immediate result of this policy was to

keep them strangers to the reforms which were constantly taking place beyond their boundaries, and fatally to shut them up within the narrow circle of their own old views. On the other hand, the new blood which was poured into the colony came from the most advanced country under the sun in point of trade and industry. They brought with them the civilization of their native land and their strength was ceaselessly renewed by a steady current of immigration, which added not only to their numbers but to their stock of information and their ideas."

Mr. Laurier's maiden speech doubtless had its share of party rhetoric and of an Opposition member's licensed criticism. Yet it was in matter a distinct achievement for a man of thirty, broad in its sweep and markedly free from partisan recriminations, while the grace and persuasiveness of his manner held high promise. The steady drain of Quebeckers to the industrial towns of the Eastern States to which he called attention was a serious loss. In a vivid passage in a speech the following session, discussing some restrictions introduced by the government on the settlement of the Crown lands of the province, Mr. Laurier pictured fifty thousand sturdy Canadians filing in slow and unbroken column past the minister, on their way into exile in the Republic, crying Roman-wise, *Ave, migraturi te salutant*.

It was, however, in the debate in 1871 on the abolition of dual representation that Mr. Laurier most clearly showed his strength. The constitutional issues

involved were then as ever more congenial to him than economic questions: his training as a lawyer, his reading in the classics of French radicalism and English liberalism, and his position as a member of a minority relying on constitutional guarantees for the preservation of its rights, gave a leading place in his thinking to considerations of justice and of the legality in which justice was assumed to be enshrined.

The system of dual representation, by which the same men could hold seats both in the federal parliament and in the legislature of their province, had not been made a positive feature of the Confederation scheme. It had developed because no law forbade it, and because of the dearth of men of first-rate calibre. Each party was keen to be represented by its strongest men both at the federal and at the provincial capital. Sir John Macdonald, with his theoretical preference for a legislative rather than a federal union of the Dominion, and his practical desire to have his hand on the provincial machine, was particularly determined in support of the dual system. It had its strong features, raising the level of capacity in the local legislatures, and in some cases conducing to harmony between federal and provincial policy. Yet there were still stronger grounds of objection on principle, and in spite of the short sessions which were then the rule, the practical inconvenience of adjusting the meetings of parliament and of legislature every year in such a way as to avoid conflict was increasingly felt.

In discussing the general question of constitutional

limitations, Mr. Laurier gave interesting evidence of the influence on his thought of the social-contract doctrines of the older radical individualist tradition:

When a people accept a constitution, they make the sacrifice of a portion of their liberty, a generous sacrifice by which each gives up something belonging to himself individually for the benefit and security of the whole. When a people accept a constitution they trace out themselves the circle which they assign to their liberties; they say to themselves, in a sense: This space belongs to me; here I can speak, think, act; I owe no account of my words, my thoughts, my acts to any one except to my own conscience and to God; but as regards society, here its domain begins and mine ends, and I shall not go further. Still, like all human works, constitutions are not perfect. New horizons, which were not before perceived, are constantly opening up, and unsuspected abuses are discovered. It is then the duty of the legislature to step in and enlarge or contract, according to needs and circumstances, the circle within which the institutions of the country move.

Passing to the specific issue, he showed convincingly that dual representation led to practical inconvenience and inconsistency of policy, and particularly that it tended to confuse federal and provincial issues and subordinate provincial to federal policy. For Quebec the system was particularly dangerous: "With the single mandate, Quebec is Quebec; with the double mandate, it becomes merely an appendix to Ottawa."

The motion to abolish dual representation was defeated by a small margin on this occasion; it was carried the next session, only to be rejected in the legislative council. In the meantime the province of Ontario had abolished the system in 1872. In 1873 the Dominion

parliament made the prohibition general by providing that members of any provincial legislature should be ineligible for the federal house.

Mr. Laurier spoke rarely, but always with effect. The Quebec correspondent of the chief French Liberal newspaper, "Le Pays," summing up the session of 1872, declared that "Mr. Laurier has definitely carried off the sceptre of eloquence in the Legislative Assembly; I cannot, however, help reproaching him for not taking part often enough in the debates." Even "Le Nouveau Monde," the ultra-clerical organ, generously bore tribute to the grace of his style and his insistence on going back to first principles—though unfortunately those principles were Liberal if not Socialist.

In the first ten years of Wilfrid Laurier's public career, the outstanding issue with which he had to deal was the hostility of a vigorous and aggressive section of the Quebec clergy to the party of which he was one of the responsible leaders. It has been seen that in the twenty years before Confederation the Rouge party and its journalistic spokesmen had, not without reason, found themselves in the black books of the clergy, and that with much less reason Bishop Bourget and his abettors had waged war upon the young men grouped in l'Institut Canadien who had dared to maintain the liberty of inquiry and discussion. In the dozen years that followed, the storm, instead of abating, grew more violent. The area of conflict widened, occupying the whole provincial stage, and the connection with the contem-



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poraneous movements in Europe became still more marked than in the Union period.

One factor in the situation was that the aggressively ultramontane wing of the Church in Quebec had grown more powerful. Mgr. Bourget and Mgr. Laffèche were now older and more firmly established in their seats, with wills which had become no less firm with years of exercised authority. Around them, and particularly in Montreal, there gathered the men of what Mgr. Bourget termed the New School, journalists like the editors of the "Nouveau Monde" and the "Franc-Parleur," pamphleteers like Alphonse Villeneuve, and preachers like Abbé Pelletier and Father Braün, a newly come Jesuit. In the archbishop's palace, in the Seminary of St. Sulpice and in Laval University at Quebec, another temper and other views of how the Church's interest could best be served prevailed, but the fighting, uncompromising, unrecking minority daily gained ascendancy.

The activity of this school was the more intense because Confederation seemed to have left them a free field. In Quebec as in the other provinces there had been set up a provincial government to which were assigned education and the local matters in which the Church was chiefly concerned. No longer was it necessary to run the gauntlet of a vigilant and biased Clear Grit group from Upper Canada when matters ecclesiastical were brought before the House. In Quebec the people were four-fifths Catholic, and on this fact the ultramontane wing based its hopes of moulding the province to its will.

But more effective than any other factor was the influence of the Old World conflict. The Canadian movement was not merely parallel with the European, but in issues and inspiration, party labels and party cries, it was directly and closely shaped by it.

In Catholic Europe, and particularly in France, a struggle had waged for centuries between opposing tendencies, which before 1789 were usually termed Gallican and ultramontane and after 1789 liberal and ultramontane, though the shades of opinion were too multiform and shifting for any single labels to qualify them aright. The Gallican sought to build up an independent national church, demanding administrative authority for the king, and, usually, doctrinal authority for church councils, as against the claims of the papacy. The ultramontane, looking "beyond the mountains" to Rome, insisted that the one Holy Catholic Church must be ruled as a unity, that the Pope as its head and God's vice-regent not only was supreme in spiritual affairs, but was entitled, because of the inherent superiority of spiritual power over temporal, to control all temporal affairs, and they were not few, in which moral or spiritual issues could be said to be involved. The Gallican on the whole had the better of the dispute, until the French Revolution seemed likely to end it by completing the destruction alike of national church and papal power. The national churches, undermined by the rationalist questioning of the age of Voltaire and weakened by the worldliness of the higher clergy, appeared destined to crumble under the attacks of the revolution-

ary spirit which accepted no institution however ancient and no claim that could not justify itself at the bar of reason. The papacy, with its Italian possessions invaded and seized, and the Popes themselves exiled and prisoners, had fallen to its lowest ebb of power.

Yet the tide speedily turned. The nineteenth century witnessed no more remarkable development than the steady revival of the Roman Catholic Church and the still more rapid growth of the ultramontane spirit within the Church. The people, when admitted to power, proved to be much more religious than the sceptical aristocrats of the old régime. In the softer lights of romanticism, faiths revived which had wilted under the harsh noonday glare of rationalism. Kings and nobles and capitalists, seeking to build up bulwarks against tumultuous change, turned to the most ancient and unchanging seat of authority in Europe. But the new religious zeal, for all the efforts of Bourbon and Hapsburg kings, could not be put back into the old bottles of Gallicanism. The clergy in France had ceased to be a separate estate of the realm; the episcopate had ceased to be made up of scions of ancient families, bound by training and territorial possessions to the political interests of their kingdom. All the men of vitality in the reviving Church preferred to be the religious servants of the Vicar of Christ rather than the civil servants of a Bourbon king.

What was to be the attitude of the ancient power thus revived to the new power unloosed by the Revolution? Could the Church accept the principles of '89 and '93,

inscribe "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" on its banners, and make terms with Liberalism and the states in which Liberalism was in control? Continental Liberalism, with its emphasis on the individual, had assumed a state founded on the free contract of individual men, had asserted the right to freedom of thought, of speech, and of organization—and then had often inconsistently refused the Church freedom to act and organize as it willed. The Church had held that political societies were not man-made but ordained of Heaven, and that individual reason and individual claims must be subordinated to the authority in Church and State which God himself had set up.

There were many ardent spirits in France, Lamennais, Lacordaire and Montalembert foremost among them, who believed it would be possible to bring the Church and Liberalism to terms, and to develop a Catholic Liberalism which would meet the needs of the new day.<sup>1</sup> They besought the Pope to place himself at the head of a purified Liberal movement in Europe, and to base Catholicism firmly once more on the will and the devotion of the multitudes. In revolt against the policy which made the Church merely an instrument of state policy, they turned to Rome for freedom from royal shackles; urging freedom for themselves, they were prepared to extend it to others. Fighting Gallican kings and ministers, they sought to be at once ultramontane and liberal, ultramontane from religious conviction and

<sup>1</sup>"I am a disciple of Lacordaire," wrote Mr. Laurier in 1897, replying to a fellow-Liberal who took the uncompromising anti-clerical Liberalism of Continental Europe as his model.

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liberal from political expediency. "Men tremble before Liberalism," Lamennais had declared; "make it Catholic, and society will be born again." "There are two Liberalisms," he wrote in "L'Avenir" in 1830, "the old and the new: the old, heir to the doctrines of eighteenth century philosophy, breathes only religious intolerance and oppression, but the new liberalism, which will in time overcome the old, is only concerned, as regards religion, with demanding the separation of Church and State, a separation which is necessary for the liberty of the Church." "Understand clearly, my Catholic brethren," Lacordaire had added: "if you wish liberty for yourselves, you must wish it for all men and for every land. If you demand it for yourselves alone, it will never be given you. Grant it where you are masters in order that it may be given you where you are slaves." And the Bishop of Orleans, Mgr. Dupanloup, had been equally clear-cut: "These liberties so dear to those who accuse us of not loving them, we proclaim and we invoke, for ourselves as well as for others. We accept, we invoke, the principles and the liberties proclaimed in '89."

Catholic Liberalism fought in vain. The Liberals of the straiter sect would not make peace, continuing to attack the doctrines of the Church and too suspicious of its power to grant it the unrestricted liberty of teaching and organization that was demanded. Liberal or constitutional politicians, particularly in central Europe, insisted that the Church had no rights save what the state conferred, and that the religious affairs of a nation should be regulated by the Minister of Worship as for-

eign affairs were regulated by the Foreign Secretary. Nor was Rome more ready to accept a compromise. Liberalism had too much to say about the rights of man, and too little about duty to God; it erred in endeavouring to found society upon the shifting sands of individual compact, instead of upon the rock of divine ordinance applied and interpreted by the Church and its earthly head; Liberalism was only Gallicanism transformed for the worse, kingless as well as godless; liberty was not for all times and places, for while truth must always be given liberty, the right to do wrong or think wrong could not be claimed. Time and time again the decision was given against Catholic Liberalism. In 1832 Gregory XVI issued his famous Encyclical, "Mirari vos," condemning the policy of its leaders, particularly of Lamennais, and repudiating "the absurd and erroneous maxim that liberty of conscience must be assured and guaranteed to all." In 1864, Pius IX, who had been hailed as liberal in his early days, but had become more conservative after having been driven from Rome in the revolution of 1848, issued the Syllabus, containing a list of "the principal errors of our time," including notably the advocacy of separation of Church and State, and of the necessity of reconciling the Church and modern Liberalism. Finally in 1869, the great Vatican Council, attended by over seven hundred bishops and prelates from every Catholic people under the sun, after much debate and wide difference of opinion, voted overwhelmingly to accept the doctrine of papal infallibility on questions of faith and morals.

Ultramontanism had triumphed, triumphed so completely that leaders of the Church thereafter denied that it was merely one current of action and opinion, and insisted that it was synonymous with any permissible interpretation of Roman Catholicism itself. Yet if accepted within the Church, the tendencies of which the proclamation of papal infallibility was the crowning achievement were not accepted by European statesmen. Austria annulled the Concordat, Prussia launched out upon its Kulturkampf, and in France the war between clerical and anti-clerical parties grew ever more bitter until it led, many years later, to the disestablishment of the Church and the expulsion of the religious orders. The day after the decree was issued, war broke out between France and Prussia, Napoleon withdrew the troops which had garrisoned the Papal States, and the temporal power of the Pope collapsed in the very year that his spiritual authority reached transcendent heights.

In Canada as elsewhere the Church authorities were divided in opinion as to the doctrinal soundness or the practical expediency of the Syllabus and the definition of papal infallibility. In Quebec, Archbishop Baillargeon circulated among his clergy the famous letter in which Bishop Dupanloup, on the eve of departing for the Council, had vigorously and minutely called in question both the soundness and opportuneness of the doctrine. But the men of the newer school, led by Bishop Bourget, gave hearty support to the ultramontane movement, and were encouraged by its success to assert a wider influence in state affairs and to take a

stronger line against their more moderate brethren within the Church itself.

A remarkable episode, making dramatically clear the closer bonds that now united Quebec and Rome, was the organization in 1867 and the two years following of companies of Papal Zouaves for the defence of the Pope's temporal realms. So strong was the conviction that the whole future of religion and the Church were imperilled, that hundreds of young crusaders, fêted and garlanded by sympathetic friends and blessed by Bishop Bourget in a glowing pastoral, crossed the seas from this land that had seemed to know little and care less for Old World quarrels, prepared to fight side by side with papal guards against the forces that were striving to make Italy a single nation, with Rome as its centre and crown.

At home, the new spirit was manifested in many onslaughts against the men of moderate views. The Seminary of St. Sulpice in Montreal, and Laval University in Quebec, with the archbishop as its patron, were vigorously attacked in the sixties and seventies. Mgr. Bourget was Bishop of Montreal, but the Seminary, as seigneur in receipt of rents and *lods et ventes*, and as curé, in receipt of tithes, secured the chief revenues accruing within the diocese. The main issue at stake was the right of the bishop to subdivide the old single parish of Montreal, hitherto in charge of the Seminary; a subsidiary question was as to whether he could establish the new parishes without the consent of the majority of the parishioners concerned, and the formal approval of



the State. Sir George Cartier and "La Minerve" stoutly championed the Seminary; in "Le Nouveau Monde," established in 1864 under his direct control, Mgr. Bourget found vigorous newspaper support. Against Laval University, again, charges of Gallican and Liberal leanings were freely brought. Even old political friends were not spared. The hostility of Mgr. Bourget contributed heavily to Cartier's defeat in the general election of 1872. At his death a year later the "Nouveau Monde" very frankly exposed his fault: "The epoch of Mr. Cartier's greatest power was also the epoch when the errors which were to prove fatal developed. Thinking himself invincible, he forgot the source whence he derived his strength. . . . The attempt in which he persisted with so great perseverance to defeat the projects of his Bishop and procure the annulment of canonical decrees by the civil tribunals, destroyed the confidence of the Catholics and brought on the ruin of the colossus."

Not content with indirect control, the ultramontane school determined in 1871 to enter the political field openly and aggressively. Early in that year a group of editors and lawyers, all deep-dyed Conservatives, and all, in their own words, "belonging heart and soul to the ultramontane school," gathered in Montreal to consider how best to advance their cause. The group included F. X. A. Trudel, a prominent member of the Legislative Assembly, A. B. Routhier, and other lawyers, and the leading ultramontane editors, Alphonse Desjardins of "L'Ordre," Magloire Macleod of the "Journal des

Trois-Rivières," M. Renault of the "Courrier du Canada," and C. Beausoleil, the editor, and Canon Larmache, the censor, of "Le Nouveau Monde." They decided, after recalling the effective work Louis Veillot had done in France by his uncompromising stand, to launch a movement for organizing a Catholic party, or rather for purging the Conservative party of the anti-clerical elements which were creeping in. A manifesto embodying their views was drawn by M. Routhier, revised by Mgr. Lafèche, approved by Mgr. Bourget, and published first in the "Journal des Trois-Rivières" on April 20, 1871.

The "Catholic Programme," as the manifesto was termed, was devised to guide aright the Catholic voters in the approaching provincial elections. Taking as its starting-point a pastoral of Mgr. Lafèche exhorting the people to choose legislators who would safeguard the interests of the Church, the "Programme" declared that since the separation of Church and State was an absurd and impious doctrine, and legislators would therefore have to do with matters ecclesiastical, it was essential for Catholics to choose men who gave full and unre-served adhesion to the religious, political and social doctrines of their church. Protestants, of course, would have the same liberty. This involved, as a rule, the support of the Conservative party, as the only one offering valid guarantees for the interests of religion, but the support should not be blind. Only those candidates should be chosen who would agree to modify the laws of the province in regard to education, marriage, the



BISHOP BOURGET



BISHOP  
LAFLECHE

CARDINAL  
TASCHEREAU



erection of parishes and other matters, in the way demanded by the Bishops. In detail, this meant: "1° If the contest is between two Conservatives, it goes without saying that we shall support the one who accepts the platform we have just outlined; 2° If, on the contrary, it is between a Conservative of any shade whatever and an adept of the Liberal school, our sympathies will be given actively to the former; 3° If the only candidates who come forward in a constituency are both Liberals or oppositionists, we must choose whichever will agree to our terms; 4° Finally, in the event that the contest lies between a Conservative who rejects our programme and an opportunist of any brand who accepts it, the position would be more delicate. To vote for the former would be to contradict the doctrine we have just expounded; to vote for the latter would be to imperil the Conservative party, which we wish to see strong. What decision should we make as between these two dangers? In this case we should advise Catholic electors to abstain from voting."

This extraordinary document was republished and supported by the "Nouveau Monde," the "Franc Parleur," the "Ordre," the "Courrier du Canada," the "Union des Cantons de l'Est," and the "Pionnier de Sherbrooke. Several members of the Assembly hastened to proclaim their adhesion. But "La Minerve" and the erstwhile clerical "Journal de Québec" flatly and vigorously denounced the manifesto as an insufferable affront. More significant still was the publication of a letter, on April 26, from Archbishop Taschereau, stat-

ing that he knew of the document only through the newspapers and that it therefore lay under the grave disability of having been drawn up wholly without any participation by the episcopacy; no member of the clergy was authorized to exceed the limits laid down by the Fourth Council of Quebec. This disavowal did not deter the two episcopal champions of ultramontanism. Both issued pastorals approving its doctrines, and stated publicly and explicitly that they endorsed the Programme, Mgr. Bourget adding that he considered it the surest safeguard for a truly Conservative party.

When the provincial elections of 1871, in which Wilfrid Laurier was returned for Drummond-Arthabaska, were over, the Liberals found themselves once more in a small minority. A group of moderate Liberals determined to make a fresh start and blot out the tradition of anti-clericalism which barred their path to power. Under the leadership of Louis A. Jetté, a Montreal barrister, the endeavour was made to reorganize the Liberal party as the Parti National. The new label was accepted, though without enthusiasm, by the old Rouges, and fresh recruits were gathered in circles friendly to the clergy. The Parti National stood for Canada first and last, had a leaning toward protection, and expressed the friendliest feelings toward the clergy, though still solicitous to prevent their robes being soiled in the mire of politics. A new journal, "Le National," was established in Montreal to voice its views, and the "Bien Public" of the same city, and "L'Electeur" and

“L’Evènement” of Quebec, gave it general support.<sup>1</sup>

The effects of the new tactics were seen in the increased Liberal representation in the federal elections of 1872, and particularly in the defeat of the veteran Cartier himself by Jetté in Montreal East. In the latter election there was open alliance between the Parti National and the Ultramontanes against their common foe. But the reconciliation did not prove lasting. The great bulk of the clergy looked upon this sudden repentance as merely a ruse, and the fighting clans among the old Rouges were uneasy in their unwonted company. Gradually the transformation was reversed, the former chieftains again took control, and the Parti National faded into the Liberal party once more. When the Liberal party came to power in Ottawa after the exposure of the Pacific scandal, it was the old Rouge leaders, Letellier, Fournier, Laflamme, Geoffrion, who were taken into the cabinet, not the Jettés. The appointment of Cauchon was the only concession made to the new allies.

Writing in July 1874 to James Young, an Ontario member whom he had met at Ottawa, Mr. Laurier explains the situation:

The *Nouveau Monde* party have been clamorous to have Jetté installed in office. You want to know the reason. Here it is. The *Nouveau Monde* party are not Liberals: they are of the worst class of Conservatives—they are Ultramontanes.

<sup>1</sup> “. . . We are a national party because, before all, we are attached to our nation, and because we have pledged our unswerving loyalty to Canada above the whole world: Canada against the world. . . . ‘Le National’ will be a political and non-religious paper, but, as the special organ of the Catholic population, and in conformity with the opinions of the di-

That party have been instrumental in making Cartier what he was amongst us. They took him when he was nothing, and for years fought all his battles. They approved of everything he said or did, they represented him as a pillar of the altar, and they poured the blessings of the Church over all his scandals. Cartier, as long as he was weak and needy, humiliated his despotic nature to them, and was in their hands a pliant tool. But when, after Confederation, he found himself supported by an overwhelming majority, he gave free vent to his own haughty nature. He did nothing against them, it is true, but he treated them as inferiors, and no longer submissively kissed their hands: that was enough to alienate their affections. He did still more: he gave them to understand very freely that he was the master, that he could rule and would rule without them.

The Ultramontanes were incensed with rage, but what could they do? Cartier knew perfectly what he was about. They had too long proclaimed him a little saint, to brand him now as a heretic or an enemy of the Church. Cartier knew perfectly well that they would not dare to undo their own work.

They then adopted a new tactics. (Is this English, by the way?) They made a movement forward in the doctrine. Cartier was yet a good man, but he could be better. He had too much of the Liberal ideas in him; though he had been a servant of the Church, he had not in him the true spirit of the Church in all its purity.

Our friend Jetté, who is clever, and has always been known as a moderate Liberal, adopted this new programme. In return, he was adopted both by the Ultramontanes, on account of his avowed principles, and by the Liberals, on account of his supposed tendencies. Since then, Jetté has always acted with us, and in the same time, has always been careful to keep on good terms with the Ultramontanes. And this is the reason why they have been so zealous to get him a seat in the Cabinet.

rectors of the journal, when occasion arises, we shall concur with Catholic opinion, and we repudiate in advance anything which may inadvertently be overlooked in the hasty editing of a daily paper, in order to protest our entire devotion and our filial obedience to the Church."—Opening manifesto of "Le National," April 24, 1872.



## FIRST YEARS IN PARLIAMENT

They want to have there a representative of their own principles.

The Parti National diversion had failed to avert the wrath of the ultramontane crusaders. More convinced than ever that even moderate Liberals were incorrigible, they renewed their endeavour to place submissive politicians in control of the local government. Developments in the provincial field soon provided an opportunity. The Conservative government of Gédéon Ouimet, who had succeeded Chauveau as premier in 1873, was forced to resign in September, 1874, as the result of charges of administrative corruption—the Tanneries or “land-swap” scandal. The Ouimet cabinet had consisted mainly of the Cartier wing of the Conservative party. Charles de Boucherville, who formed the new administration, was one of the leading lay adherents of the Programme. When the general provincial elections followed in July, 1875, the whole weight of the ultramontane wing of the clergy was thrown to their support. The Liberals were nearly annihilated. Their leader, Henri Joly de Lotbinière, who was a Protestant, offered to resign on the ground that his religion was a handicap to his party, but his supporters in the House denied that the ultramontanes could be any more hostile to a Protestant than to a Catholic Liberal, and insisted on his retaining his post.

The activities of the majority in the new legislature soon justified its ultramontane backers. In the first session three significant acts were passed. One was de-

signed to prevent a second Guibord appeal to the courts; it declared the right of the ecclesiastical authorities to designate the place in the cemetery where each individual was to be buried, and provided that if according to the canonical rules and in the opinion of the bishop any deceased person could not be buried in consecrated ground with liturgical prayers, he should receive civil burial in ground adjoining the cemetery. A second law gave civil confirmation to the action of Bishop Bourget in dividing the parish of Montreal; a marginal note, later explained away as an inexact expression of a compiler, declared that "decrees of our Holy Father the Pope are binding." Most important was the establishment of education upon a wholly denominational basis, and the restriction of state control by making the superintendent a civil servant instead of a cabinet member as formerly. Control of Catholic education was given to a committee consisting of the bishops and an equal number of appointed laymen, the bishops, however, alone enjoying the right to be represented by proxy. Control of Protestant schools was confided as fully and freely to a Protestant committee. It was urged that it was desirable to remove education from politics, and that the freedom given the Protestant minority was a proof of liberality and tolerance, but the fact remained that the measure was a concession to the element which opposed state control over education and other matters declared to be within the Church's sphere.

The next concerted action was the issuing of a joint pastoral on the political situation. The Council of

Bishops had on several occasions issued advice on political issues to clergy and laity; the Second Council, of 1858, urged the clergy to be neutral in political issues where religion was not involved; the Third, in 1863, condemned secret societies and the plague of evil newspapers; the Fourth, in 1868, criticized the assertion that religion had nothing to do with politics, and the Fifth, in 1873, attacked, but in brief and vague terms, that false serpent Catholic Liberalism and asserted that the Church was independent of the State and superior to it. Now in September, 1875, Archbishop Taschereau was induced to join the other bishops of the province in issuing a joint letter, designed, as the letter stated, "to shut the mouths of those who, to sanction their false doctrines, find pretexts for escaping the teachings of their own bishop by invoking the authority of other bishops which unfortunately they abuse, deceiving the good people."

The joint pastoral of September, 1875, was mainly a warning against Catholic Liberalism—that subtle error, that serpent that crept into Eden, that most bitter and most dangerous enemy of the Church. "Distrust above all," the letter ran, "that liberalism which wishes to cover itself with the fine name of 'catholic' in order to accomplish more surely its criminal mission. You will recognize it easily from the description which the Sovereign Pontiff has often given of it: 1° The endeavour to subordinate the Church to the State; 2° incessant attempts to break the bonds which unite the children of the Church with one another and with their clergy; 3° the monstrous

alliance of truth with error, under the pretext of reconciling all things and avoiding conflicts; 4° finally, the illusion, or at times the hypocrisy, which conceals a boundless pride under the mask of religion and of fine assurances of submission to the Church. . . . No one, therefore, may in future with good conscience be permitted to remain a Catholic Liberal." As to the activity of the clergy in politics, they had the same rights as other citizens, and further, as representing the Church might and should intervene in moral issues or questions affecting the liberty or independence of the Church. An individual candidate may be a menace, or a whole party may be so considered, not only because of its own programme and antecedents but because of the programme and private antecedents of its leaders and its journals. In such case the Church must speak, the priest "may declare with authority that to vote in such a way is a sin, and exposes the doer to the censures of the Church." If any priest errs in applying these principles, the remedy lies in the tribunals of the Church, not, as had been hinted, in haling the priest before the civil courts. A circular to the clergy, accompanying the pastoral, warned the priests not to intervene too freely and to consult their bishop before acting in unusual circumstances. If accused of undue influence before a civil court, they should deny its competence, but if condemned should suffer persecution in patience. In a pastoral letter of February, 1876, Bishop Bourget explained how the layman could carry out this advice: let

each say this in his heart, "I hear my curé, my curé hears the Bishop, the Bishop hears the Pope, and the Pope hears our Lord Jesus Christ."

The pastoral was taken as a fresh declaration of war on the Liberal party. True, no party was specifically named, but, as Mgr. Laffèche declared, "it would not be strictly true to say that the letter did not condemn the Liberal party." The clerical press, and when by-elections afforded an opportunity, the majority of the clergy, dotted the i's and crossed the t's. In January, 1876, two federal by-elections were held in Quebec constituencies. In Charlevoix, M. Tremblay, a good Catholic all his life, was the Liberal candidate. His opponent was Hector Langevin, who had been tarred by the Pacific scandal, but was still an aspirant for Cartier's mantle. Langevin announced that he presented himself after consulting the clergy of the district and with their full and hearty support, though Mr. Tremblay was able to produce two dissenting curés. Priest after priest denounced Liberalism, invoked the horrors of the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, pictured the contest as one between the Pope and Garibaldi, and warned his hearers of how they would feel on their death-bed, or still worse, if carried away by sudden death, if they had voted for a party condemned by the Church. Some curés stated explicitly that to vote for the Liberals was to commit a mortal sin, and such phrases as "subtle serpent," "false Christs," "yawning abyss," heightened many a discourse. In

Chambly, one curé, M. Lussier, after consulting Mgr. Bourget, declared that no Catholic could be a moderate Liberal: moderate meant liar. The crusade had its effect, and in both constituencies the Liberal candidates were decisively defeated.

The policy of clerical intervention reached its climax in the pastoral of 1875, and the elections of that and the following year. Many were intimidated by the reign of terror that prevailed, but others were roused to a resistance which compelled a halt.

The ultramontane campaign had not been without its effect on the Protestant minority in Quebec. Its leaders were divided between acquiescing in a situation in which they themselves were accorded full liberty, and protesting against the inroads on the liberty of their fellow-citizens. In December, 1875, Huntington took occasion in a by-election speech in Argenteuil to denounce the English-speaking Protestants for giving ultramontanism its chance by their blind support of the Conservative party, and to call upon them to support the French Liberals in the common cause of freedom. Holton at once raised the question in Parliament, denouncing this "offensive attack" and asking whether it had the sanction of the cabinet of which Huntington was a member. Mackenzie replied by expressing his regret at Huntington's remarks, and his disapproval of raising religious issues in politics; Huntington, while making it clear that he spoke only as a private citizen of his province, declared that the opinions he had expressed were his opinions still. On the other side of politics, Sir

A. T. Galt took the same stand as Huntington in speeches and pamphlets unfolding "the dangers of ultramontanism," but his fellow-Conservative, Thomas White, insisted that Protestants, who had been fairly treated themselves, should not interfere in the family quarrels of the majority, and Macdonald characteristically urged that the best policy was "to use the priests for the next election but be ready to fight them in the Dominion parliament," and insisted that, though their arrogance was hard to bear, it could be borne when it was remembered that "ultramontanism depends on the life of two old men, the Pope and Bishop Bourget." Prudence prevailed in both political camps, so far as the English-speaking Protestants were concerned, and the French Catholics were left to work out their own salvation.

The seriousness of the situation faced by Quebec Liberals may well be gauged by a valedictory address of one of the foremost journalists of the day. Mr. L. O. David, editor of the "Bien Public," was a man not only of standing and ability but of unquestioned moderation in all affairs, and friendly to the Church, of which he was a faithful son; he had been one of the minority which seceded from l'Institut Canadien in 1858, and had taken an active part in endeavouring to live down the Rouge tradition by the establishment of the Parti National. Yet he found his journal banned in parish after parish, and in May, 1876, announced his retirement. "The later pastorals of the Bishop of Montreal," he declared, "and the interpretation which had been put

upon them by a number of priests, and certain facts which I need not mention, have finally convinced me that the profession of politics has become intolerable in this country to anyone who has more independence of character than of purse. In the name of religion, we have seen destruction fall upon the political careers of sincere and earnest men whose religious convictions have never been questioned. The clergy cannot pretend that they have reason to fear the Liberals on account of their past, for they had absolved them of their past in 1872. The Reform party having done nothing since then against the clergy and religion, the religious war now being waged against it is unjustifiable. . . . The pastoral letters of the Bishop of Montreal, which were nothing more than articles of the 'Nouveau Monde' converted into mandements, are incomprehensible. They have stirred prejudices, encouraged bad faith, and excited a certain number of priests who needed to be restrained. There are parishes where since then the pulpit has become nothing but a tribune for the most violent political harangues. It would appear that there is no longer but one crime in the world, but one mortal sin, that of voting for a Reform candidate, of receiving a Reform journal which questions the infallibility of Sir John and Mr. Langevin. . . . A Catholic people will support such abuses long; they will even shut their eyes not to see them in order that their faith may not suffer, but as abuses rapidly accumulate when they are not controlled, the day arrives when they become intoler-



able and then indifference toward religion and hatred toward the priest produce revolution.”

Mr. Laurier, writing to a friend in December, 1875, in regard to rumours of his approaching accession to the cabinet, makes equally clear the tension of the situation: “My name has been put forward, but I never made a step towards it. To speak the truth, I do not desire an appointment to an official position at present. But the press, which in this province is in the hands of young men, calls loud for me. The men of more mature age desire to have Cauchon in. The fact is, that Cauchon has all the qualities of the position, but he is so thoroughly unprincipled and so deeply stained with the jobberies of the old régime that his appointment would perhaps be more an injury than a benefit to our cause. As to myself personally, I have the bones and sinew of the Liberal party. They push me ahead, and would have me to take a more active part in politics than I have done hitherto. I, however, feel very reluctant to do it. I am at present quiet and happy. The moment I accept office, I will go into it actively and earnestly, and from that moment my quietness and happiness will be gone. It will be a war with the clergy, a war of every day, of every moment. . . . Political strifes are bitter enough in your province, but you have no idea of what it is with us. . . . Whenever I shall be in office, I intend to go seriously into it, and I will be denounced as Anti-Christ. You may laugh at that, but it is no laughing matter to us.”

Relief from this intolerable situation came from various quarters. Appeal was made to the civil courts, and the courts set bounds to clerical intervention. Appeal was made to Rome, and the higher authorities of the Church ordained restraint. The Liberals themselves, through Wilfrid Laurier, made a declaration of their principles which it was not possible for any reasonable opponent to attack or any weak-kneed friend to renounce.

The advisability of taking legal action to halt clerical intervention in elections had been discussed in Liberal quarters for some years. The suggestion had come from the action of an Irish court, in 1872, in declaring a Galway election void because of the undue influence exercised by the clergy on behalf of the successful candidate. The Dominion law against undue influence in elections was based on the British statute. Yet the moderate men who were in control of the party's policy hesitated to take such a step. It would be charged that they were trying to deprive the priest of the elementary right of every citizen to have opinions and to urge them upon one's fellows. Even friends would contend that clerical intervention, however biased and uninformed, should be met by discussion, not by an appeal to law—as Liberals were to conclude when, many years later, in the closing rather than the opening days of Wilfrid Laurier's career, hundreds of Protestant preachers throughout Canada were stampeded and manipulated into a grossly biased and uninformed pulpit attack upon the Liberal party and its leader. But the Charle-

voix outburst determined a courageous group to take up the challenge. Appeal was at first made to the archbishop, but afterwards withdrawn, and in July, 1876, François Langelier, member of a leading Liberal family of Quebec, and professor of Civil Law in Laval, brought action in the civil court at Murray Bay. The fact of intervention and its effect in changing votes were clearly proved. Israel Tarte, who had been Langevin's election agent, conducted his case, browbeating witnesses in court and pillorying them afterwards in his newspaper, "Le Canadien." The judge was A. B. Routhier, formerly Langevin's right-hand man in politics, and the drafter of the Catholic Programme. He dismissed the petition, denying that British precedents applied in Canada under the differing relations of Church and State, and taking high ultramontane ground as to the immunity of the clergy from state question or control for their actions on a moral issue, such as voting must be when properly considered. The case was at once appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, where the unanimous decision was rendered that undue influence had been exercised and the election was declared void. Mr. Justice Ritchie declared that the clergyman, like the layman, had free and full liberty to advise and persuade, but no right, in the pulpit or out, to threaten or compel a voter to do otherwise than as he freely willed. Mr. Justice Taschereau, a brother of the archbishop, in delivering the main judgment of the court, brushed aside the claim of ecclesiastical immunity, found proof of "undue influence of the worst kind, inasmuch

as these threats and these declarations fell from the lips of priests speaking from the pulpit in the name of religion, and were addressed to persons ill-instructed and generally well-disposed to follow the counsel of their curés." In a decision rendered shortly before this appeal, three judges of the Superior Court of Quebec, Messrs. Casault, McGuire and McCord, annulled the election held in the provincial constituency of Bonaventure, where two curés had threatened to refuse the sacraments to Liberal voters, and disqualified the candidate on the ground that "these fraudulent manœuvres were practised with his knowledge and consent." Shortly after, the by-election of Chambly was voided.

The intervention of the law, external and formal in its working, could not go to the root of the matter. Of more enduring importance was the change of ecclesiastical policy, or rather, the assertion of authority by the tolerant and far-seeing elements within the Church. Mgr. Taschereau, realizing the danger of an open rupture and the introduction into Canada of a real anti-clerical movement, such as the ultramontane editors were always seeing in their nightmares, issued in May, 1876, a pastoral on the Church in politics which took much more moderate ground. The pastoral set forth the high importance of the elector's task, warned against perjury, violence, and bribery, urged calm and careful inquiry into the merits of rival candidates and their ability to conserve the people's interests, spiritual as well as temporal, denied any intention under present circumstances of urging the electors to vote for this or that

party and suggested that all join in a solemn mass to ensure guidance: this, and no more. True, the archbishop declared that his new pastoral neither revoked nor superseded the joint letter of 1875, but the outburst of indignation from certain other bishops, and their action in sending Mgr. Laffèche and Canon Lamarche hotfoot to Rome to protest were illuminating.

It was, however, with Rome itself that the last word lay. It was to Rome that Bishop Langevin's demand for the dismissal of Judge Casault from his chair at Laval, because of his judgment in the Bonaventure election, was carried; Rome upheld the professor against the bishop. It was to Rome that Conservatives appealed in 1876 when they wished to learn whether in a Montreal election it was permissible to vote for a candidate who was a Free Mason, seeing that the other candidate was worse (i. e., a Liberal), and Rome replied it was permissible. It was to Rome that the bitter and interminable disputes between Montreal and Quebec over the university question were appealed, and finally it was to Rome that in 1876 a group of Quebec Liberals, headed by Cauchon, appealed for inquiry and decision on the charges brought by their ultramontane opponents. The fact that an appeal should be carried to Rome at all made it clear how far ultramontanism had triumphed over the old Gallican spirit, even among the Liberals, but if it was to decide in any case on the ecclesiastical issues involved, it was well that the views of both parties to the controversy should be before it.

At Rome Pius IX was still Pontiff, but his years were evidently numbered, and it was an open secret that pressure was being brought to bear to ensure that his successor should be more in harmony with democratic tendencies. It was decided to send Mgr. Conroy, Bishop of Ardagh, in Ireland, as Ablegate to investigate the situation in Canada. He spent several months in diligent and unobtrusive inquiry, heard all sides, and came to the conclusion that a halt must be called. The bishops met in consistory in October, 1877, and issued a new pastoral, declaring that while the joint letter contained the true doctrine on the constitution and rights of the Church, and Liberal Catholics were still anathema, yet it was not to be assumed that any political party was condemned. The forces of moderation and tolerance had won.

While the attitude of the Church was still undetermined, Wilfrid Laurier came forward to perform one of the greatest services of his career. His speech on political Liberalism, delivered before an immense audience on the invitation of the Club Canadien of Quebec, on June 26, 1877, was essentially a manifesto of the Liberal party on the question of the relation of religion and politics. Mr. Laurier was about to assume the leadership of the Liberal party in Quebec: three months later he entered the Mackenzie cabinet. In his address at Quebec he stated his policy and his terms. At once the issue was clarified, the path of moderation and of progress marked out, and a great step taken toward the just and permanent settlement of an issue which had

threatened to divide a whole people into warring and irreconcilable factions.

Without preface, Mr. Laurier at once set forth the purpose of his address. It was to define the ideas and principles of Liberalism, in order to remove the prejudices and the opposition of those who believed that Liberalism meant heresy in faith and revolution in politics. All the charges made against the Liberal party could be crystallized in two propositions—that Liberalism was a heresy condemned by the head of the Church, and that a Catholic could not be a Liberal. It was true that Catholic Liberalism had been condemned, but what had that to do with political Liberalism? What would be the consequence of accepting the contention that no French-Canadian Catholic could be a Liberal? Either Catholics must abstain from any share in political life, or must bind themselves hand and foot to the Conservative party, must endure “the ignominy of being regarded by the other members of the Canadian family composing the Conservative party as tools and slaves.”

What was the meaning of Liberalism and Conservatism? At bottom the distinction was a matter of temperament; some men, in Macaulay's phrase, were drawn by the charm of habit and others by the charm of novelty. There was no moral superiority in either tendency. The Conservative might do good in defending old and tried institutions, or much evil in maintaining intolerable abuses; the Liberal might be a benefactor in overthrowing these abuses or a scourge in laying rash hands on hallowed institutions. Then Mr. Laurier continued:

For my part, as I have already said, I am a Liberal. I am one of those who think that everywhere, in human things, there are abuses to be reformed, new horizons to be opened up, and new forces to be developed. Moreover, Liberalism seems to me in all respects superior to the other principle. The principle of Liberalism is inherent in the very essence of our nature, in that desire for happiness with which we are all born into the world, which pursues us throughout life, and which is never completely gratified on this side of the grave. Our souls are immortal, but our means are limited. We constantly strive toward an ideal which we never attain. We dream of good, but we never realize the best. We only reach the goal we have set for ourselves, to discover new horizons opening up, which we had not before even suspected. We rush on toward them and those horizons, explored in their turn, reveal to us others which lead us on ever further and further. And thus it will be as long as man is what he is, as long as the immortal soul inhabits a mortal body; his desires will be always vaster than his means and his actions will never rise to the height of his conceptions. He is the real Sisyphus of the fable; his work, always finished, must always be begun again. This condition of our nature is precisely that which makes the greatness of man, for it condemns him irrevocably to movement, to progress; our means are limited, but our nature is perfectible and we have the infinite for our arena. Thus there is always room for the perfecting of our nature and for the attainment by a larger number of an easier way of life. This, in my eyes, is what constitutes the superiority of Liberalism.

Abuses, Mr. Laurier continued, were bound to creep into every body politic, and institutions which at the beginning were useful become intolerable because everything around them had changed, as in the instance of seigneurial tenure. Men were always found to defend these abuses to the bitter end, until they had provoked revolution. "More revolutions have been caused by



Conservative obstinacy than by Liberal exaggeration . . . ; wherever there is compression, there will be explosion, violence and ruin; . . . I hate revolution and detest all attempts to win the triumph of opinions by violence, but I am less inclined to throw the responsibility on those who make them than on those who provoke them by their blind obstinacy.”

The Liberal party of England had known how to reform abuse before discontent fermented into revolution: the Liberals of the Continent had not been so wise:

What is grander than the history of the great English Liberal party during the present century? On its threshold looms up the figure of Fox, the wise, the generous Fox, defending the cause of the oppressed, wherever there were oppressed to be defended. A little later comes O'Connell, claiming and securing for his co-religionists the rights and privileges of British subjects. He is helped in this work by all the Liberals of the three kingdoms, Grey, Brougham, Russell, Jeffrey and a host of others. Then came, one after the other, the abolition of the rule of the landed oligarchy, the repeal of the corn laws, the extension of the suffrage to the working classes, and lastly, to crown the whole, the disestablishment of the Church of England as the state religion in Ireland. . . . Members of the Club Canadien, Liberals of the province of Quebec, there are our models, there are our principles, there is our party!

It is true that there is in Europe, in France, in Italy and in Germany a class of men who give themselves the title of Liberals, but who have nothing of the Liberal about them but the name, and who are the most dangerous of men. They are not Liberals; they are revolutionaries; in their principles they are so extravagant that they aim at nothing less than the destruction of modern society. With these men we have nothing in common, but it is the tactics of our adversaries always to identify us with them.

Mr. Laurier proceeded to review the history of the Canadian political parties. Up to 1848, all French-Canadians had belonged to the one Liberal party. Then, in the conflict between LaFontaine and Papineau, divergence had begun. A group of young men of great talent and greater impetuosity, disappointed at having come upon the scene too late to stake their heads in 1837, first followed, then outmarched Papineau. They founded "L'Avenir," and issued a programme beginning with election of justices of the peace and ending with annexation to the United States which would have meant a complete revolution in the province. Their exaggerations were not surprising; in Canada, the memory of the vengeance exacted for the rebellion and the lack of faith of the Colonial Office stirred discontent, while from Europe there came great soul-disturbing blasts of revolution. The only excuse for these Liberals was their youth: the oldest of them was not more than twenty-two. Hardly had they taken two steps when they recognized their error, but the harm was done:

The clergy, alarmed at these proceedings, which reminded them of the revolutionaries of Europe, at once declared merciless war on the new party. The English population, friendly to liberty, but equally friendly to the maintenance of order, also ranged themselves against the new party. During twenty-five years that party has remained in opposition, though to it belongs the honour of having taken the initiative in all the reforms accomplished in that period. It was in vain that it demanded and obtained judicial decentralization; it was in vain that it was the first to give an impetus to the work of colonization; it was not credited with these wise reforms. It was in vain that those children, now grown into men, disavowed the rashness of

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their youth; it was in vain that the Conservative party made mistake after mistake; the generation of the Liberals of 1848 had almost entirely disappeared from the political scene ere the dawn of a new day began to break for the Liberal party. Since that time the party has received new accessions, calmer and more thoughtful ideas have prevailed in it, and as for the old programme, nothing whatever remains of its social part, while of the political part there remain only the principles of the English Liberals.

In the meantime, a fraction of the Liberals had united with the Tories of Upper Canada, to form the Liberal-Conservative party. Of late years its leaders had sought to transform it into an ultramontane or Catholic party. They understood neither their country nor their time; all their ideas were modelled on those of the reactionaries of France. Their chief aim was to degrade religion to the level of a political party:

In our adversaries' party it is the custom to accuse us, Liberals, of irreligion. I am not here to parade my religious sentiments, but I declare that I have too much respect for the faith in which I was born ever to use it as the basis of a political organization. You wish to organize a Catholic party . . . to organize all the Catholics into one party, without other bond, without other basis, than a common religion. Have you not reflected that by that very fact you will organize the Protestant population as a single party, and then, instead of the peace and harmony now prevailing between the different elements of the Canadian people, you throw open the door to war, a war of religion, the most terrible of all wars? . . .

Our adversaries further reproach us . . . with denying to the Church the freedom to which it is entitled. They reproach us with seeking to silence the administrative body of the Church, and to prevent it from teaching the people their duties as citizens and electors. They reproach us with wanting to hinder

the clergy from sharing in politics and to relegate them to the sacristy. In the name of the Liberal party and of Liberal principles, I repel this assertion. I maintain that there is not one Canadian Liberal who wants to prevent the clergy from taking part in political affairs if they wish to do so.

In the name of what principle should the friends of liberty seek to deny to the priest the right to take part in political affairs? In the name of what principle should the friends of liberty seek to deny to the priest the right to have and to express political opinions, the right to approve or disapprove public men and their acts, and to instruct the people in what he believes to be their duty? In the name of what principle should he not have the right to say that if I am elected religion will be endangered, when I have the right to say that if my adversary is elected, the state will be endangered? . . . No, let the priest speak and preach as he thinks best; such is his right, and no Canadian Liberal will dispute that right. . . . Every one has the right not only to express his opinion, but to influence, if he can, by the expression of his opinion, the opinion of his fellow-citizens. This right exists for all, and there can be no reason why the priest should be deprived of it. I am here to speak my whole mind, and I may add that I am far from finding opportune the intervention of the clergy in the domain of politics, as it has been exercised for some years. I believe, on the contrary, that from the standpoint of the respect due his character, the priest has everything to lose by meddling in the ordinary questions of politics: still, his right to do so is indisputable, and if he thinks proper to use it, our duty, as Liberals, is to guarantee it to him against all denial.

This right, however, is not unlimited. We have no absolute rights among us. The rights of each man, in our state of society, end precisely where they encroach upon the rights of others.

The right of interference in politics ends where it would encroach upon the elector's independence. . . .

The constitution of the country rests on the freely expressed will of every elector. . . . It is perfectly legitimate to alter the

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elector's opinion by argument and all other means of persuasion, but never by intimidation. As a matter of fact, persuasion changes the elector's conviction; intimidation does not. . . . If the opinion expressed by the majority of the electors is not their real opinion, but an opinion snatched from them by fraud, by threats or by corruption, the constitution is violated, you have not government by the majority but government by the minority. . . .

I am not one of those who parade themselves as friends and champions of the clergy. However, I say this: like the most of my young fellow-countrymen, I have been educated by priests and among young men who have become priests. I flatter myself that I have among them some sincere friends, and to them at least I can and do say: Consider whether there is under the sun a country happier than our own; consider whether there is under the sun a country where the Catholic Church is freer or more privileged than it is here. Why then should you, by claiming rights incompatible with our state of society, expose this country to agitations of which the consequences are impossible to foresee? But I address myself also to all my fellow-countrymen without distinction, and to them I say: We are a free and happy people, and we are so owing to the liberal institutions by which we are governed, institutions which we owe to the exertions of our forefathers and the wisdom of the mother country. The policy of the Liberal party is to protect these institutions, to defend and extend them, and, under their sway, to develop the latent resources of our country. That is the policy of the Liberal party: it has no other.

At last Liberalism had found the interpreter it sorely needed. Rising completely above the level of partisan personalities and recriminations, frank in its recognition of past errors, moderate in its full and ready recognition of the place and rights of the clergy, firm in its insistence that these rights ended where intimidation began, inspiring in its assertion of the eternal and unchanging princi-

ples of freedom, sustained in its lofty eloquence, Mr. Laurier's luminous and persuasive speech marked a new era in the long controversy. Resistance to intolerance was given a firm foundation in the unceasing strivings of man for full and free expression, and a guiding chart in the experience and achievements of English Liberalism.

Opposition was not at once disarmed by Mr. Laurier's calm analysis of the situation, nor by the verdict of the papal legate. The ultramontane organs, while admitting the moderation of his exposition of political Liberalism, insisted that Mr. Laurier was still endeavouring to set bounds to the rights and activities of the Church and presuming to set himself above his bishops. So when the results of Mgr. Conroy's mission were announced, Mr. Tarte's journal, "Le Canadien," lamented that "concession had followed upon concession, outrage upon outrage," and the "Journal de Trois-Rivières," that "the year 1877 may be designated as the epoch of concessions and cowardice, the epoch of the triumph of Catholic Liberalism." Whereupon Mr. Laurier, in an editorial in the "Journal d'Arthabaska" (January 24, 1878), entitled "*Les Tartuffes de la Presse*," paid his respects to them once more. For many years, he wrote, these Conservative organs had cloaked themselves in the mantle of religion and sheltered themselves behind the screen of the clergy. It was a clever play, for the Canadian loved nothing in the world so much as his religion and his clergy, and to identify the cause of Conservatism and of the Church was to damn the Liberal party to in-

significance. These editors took "Louis Veillot as their model, and not possessing his talents, at least were able to imitate his excesses of speech and his bombastic style. The decalogue was revised, corrected, and considerably extended by these gentlemen. . . . They posed as theologians, twisted the sense of pastorals and mandements, and, with these documents in their hands, like the Pharisee in the Gospel, they pointed at us with the finger of scorn and demanded our exile and excommunication. The Church, that good mother, allowed these wretched *enfants terribles* to have their way, but as impunity gave them courage, our high and mighty ultramontanes set themselves to smashing the whole shop. . . . At last the attention of the Holy See was drawn upon these men and their outpourings. Wishing to bring to an end so deplorable a state of affairs, our Holy Father sent his legate, Mgr. Conroy. . . . Now Rome has spoken. But what of our high and mighty ultramontanes, 'Le Canadien' and 'Le Journal de Trois-Rivières'? . . . And these are the submissive children of the Church! Pouah! What Tartuffes!"

The struggle had not ended, but a lull had come in the fighting and high and safe ground had been occupied and consolidated. Not again for a score of years was the question of Church and State thrust into the foreground. The attitude of Wilfrid Laurier and his fellow-Liberals of Quebec had been effective in averting the danger alike of unbridled assertion of ultramontane pretensions and of the outburst of an anti-clerical campaign. The demands for the recognition of the

supremacy of the Church over the State, for the repeal of the statutes prohibiting undue intervention in elections, so far as they applied to the clergy, for the granting of civil immunity to ecclesiastics, and for the still more complete control of the schools by the Church, failed to find assent: ultramontanism reached its climax in 1876. Nor did the reaction in the form of anti-clericalism make much headway. It was only a month before Wilfrid Laurier's speech in the capital of New France that the leader of the Liberalism of Old France, M. Gambetta, had uttered his famous cry to action: "*Le cléricalisme, c'est l'ennemi.*" If the Catholic Church in Canada was spared the long and bitter onslaught which was to be its fate for the next generation in France, it was owing not only to the wisdom of some of its own leaders but to the sanity and courage of its laymen who sought, and not in vain, to reconcile faith and freedom.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE MACKENZIE ADMINISTRATION

Laurier at Ottawa—The Forming of the Mackenzie Government—The Conservative Leadership—The Liberal Leadership—Mackenzie and the Old Guard—Blake and Canada First—Unsettling Rivalry—Shifting Quebec Lieutenants—The Riel Agitation—Laurier's First Speech—Railway-building and Tariff-making—Weakening of the Government—Laurier Enters the Cabinet—Electoral Defeat and Victory—The Overthrow of the Administration.

**I**N these issues, it was as leader of Quebec Liberalism that Wilfrid Laurier spoke. The issues might have national consequences, they might be treated in a national spirit, but the stage was provincial. Like every other Canadian politician of that day, Wilfrid Laurier had to make his mark in provincial affairs before entering national politics. Canada was still merely a formal bracket, a grouping of the provinces in which lay the real springs of life and the vital traditions of politics. For a time the two fields overlapped. Well before the end of his conflict with ultramontanism in Quebec, Wilfrid Laurier had begun to take his part in the more varied struggles of federal politics.

His success in the provincial legislature had early led to demands that he should go to the federal house, where the Liberal contingent from Quebec sadly needed strengthening. Ottawa was farther from Arthabaska than Quebec, and the federal sessions were slightly longer, covering two or even three months—blessed con-

trast with the six- and eight-month sessions of later days—but these considerations did not weigh heavily against the wider opportunities of the Dominion field. He became the Liberal candidate for the federal constituency of Drummond-Arthabaska in the general election of 1874, and was returned by a majority of 238.

The political situation at Ottawa had suddenly been transformed. After Confederation, Sir John Macdonald seemed assured of an indefinite lease of power. Though a late convert to the federation project, he had rendered invaluable service in carrying it through, and had reaped from its success more popular prestige and political strength than any of his rivals. For five years he proved invincible. Then shortly after the general election of 1872 had returned the Conservatives again to power, though with lessened strength, a storm arose from an unexpected quarter and swept the government from office. One of the Liberal leaders, Lucius Huntington, brought before parliament charges of gross corruption in connection with the granting to Hugh Allan of Montreal, and his associates, the charter for the construction of the railway which was to be built to the Pacific coast in fulfilment of the terms under which the far Western province of British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871. The charges were flatly denied, but after a stormy controversy they were proved to the hilt. Allan had expended vast sums in securing the support of newspapers and the lesser politicians, particularly in Quebec, and in contributions to the campaign funds of the Conservative party in the election of 1872. Mac-

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donald and Cartier had themselves demanded and received large contributions for election purposes. Macdonald in vain insisted that there was no connection between the contributions and the granting of the charter. A wave of public indignation swept the country. Many of his own followers, notably Donald A. Smith of Hudson's Bay fame, deserted him. In November, 1873, he resigned, and the Liberal leader, Alexander Mackenzie, was called upon to form a ministry.<sup>1</sup> Two months later the new premier went to the country and came back with a majority of sixty behind him.

The Liberal party triumphed in 1874 because of its opponents' weakness rather than because of its own strength. It came to power at a critical time. The panic of 1873 and the five years of depression that followed, the inherited promise to build a railway to the Pacific, the aftermath of the rising on the Red River, would in any case have proved difficult tasks to handle. With a party which had not been fused into unity, with

<sup>1</sup> The Mackenzie ministry was formed on Nov. 7, 1873, as follows:  
Alexander Mackenzie (Ontario), Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works

Antoine A. Dorion (Quebec), Minister of Justice

Albert J. Smith (New Brunswick), Minister of Marine and Fisheries

Lue Letellier de Saint Just (Quebec), Minister of Agriculture

Richard J. Cartwright (Ontario), Minister of Finance

David Laird (P. E. I.), Minister of the Interior

Isaac Burpee (New Brunswick), Minister of Customs

David Christie (Ontario), Secretary of State

Télesphore Fournier (Quebec), Minister of Inland Revenue

Donald A. Macdonald (Ontario), Postmaster-General

Thomas Coffin (Nova Scotia), Receiver-General

William Ross (Nova Scotia), Minister of Militia and Defence

Edward Blake (Ontario), Minister without Portfolio

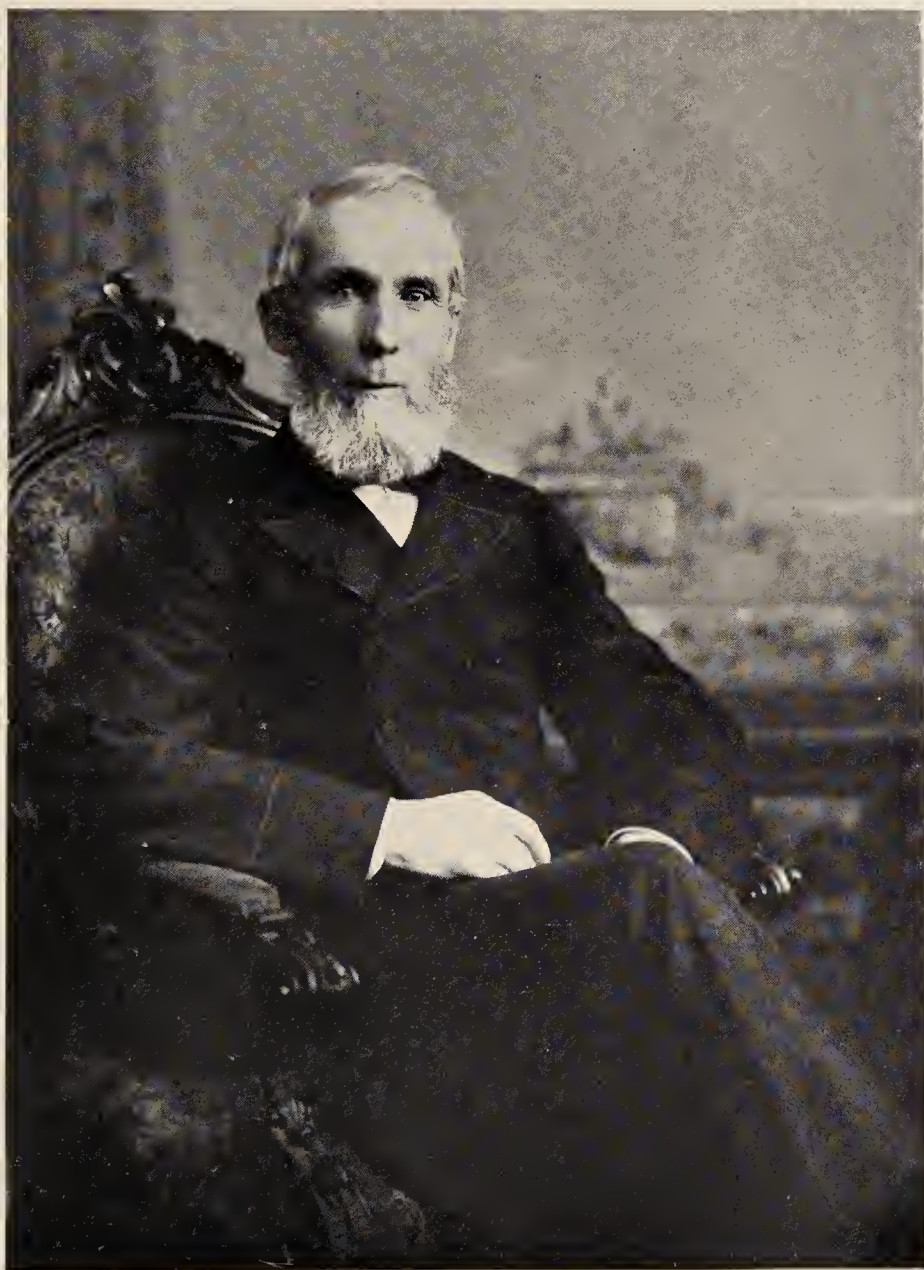
Richard W. Scott (Ontario), Minister without Portfolio

Lucius Huntington (Quebec, January, 1874), President of Privy Council

the federal leadership distracted by the rivalry of Blake and Mackenzie, and with the Quebec lieutenants shifting with kaleidoscopic quickness, it was not surprising that the first term of the Mackenzie government proved its last.

For a quarter-century after Confederation, as for many years before it, the Conservative party of Canada followed a single leader. Never in Canada's history, and rarely in the annals of any other country has any man dominated a great political party through so long a term as John A. Macdonald. His leadership was not wholly unquestioned. At times, severe illness, at others, inattention to duties, and again the seemingly hopeless load of obloquy and discredit following the revelations of the Pacific scandal, threatened his hold. Yet never for long. Macdonald's infinite patience and resource, his uncanny knowledge of men and the motives that moved them, his grip on the popular imagination not less for his human failings than for his statesman's virtues, the mistakes of his opponents or the weakness of his rivals, brought the party humbly and gratefully back to the incomparable leader. He was primarily an Ontario man, and each of the other provinces had its own leader, Cartier or Langevin, Tupper, Tilley, but the system of dual premiership which had marked the Union disappeared under Confederation and the prime minister was really first. As year after year went by, and "John A." still reigned, his luck became legendary and his prestige invincible.

The Liberal party had not such good fortune. It



ALEXANDER MACKENZIE  
Prime Minister of Canada, 1873-1878



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had not one chief but many. Leader after leader took up the task of vanquishing Sir John, and leader after leader laid it down again. Brown, Mackenzie, Blake in turn failed or found success but momentary, and Laurier won through to power only after his great rival had passed from the scene. All were men of outstanding personal force, of unquestioned sincerity and devotion to their country's good, endowed with many of the qualities that stir a people's and a party's loyalty. Brown and Blake and Laurier had broad constructive vision and a statesmanlike grasp of the wider issues of politics, and if Brown did not wholly despise the arts of the practical politician, Mackenzie and Blake as well as their successor scorned corruption and fought it whether in the ranks in front or in the ranks behind them.

In so far as the Conservatives owed their victories to the people's belief that they were more national-minded, more positive and optimistic in their policies, whether of trade development or of railway-building, there might be room for dispute but none for despair. In so far as they owed their fortune to a greater readiness to grant or to promise favours to an individual or a class at public cost, or to gerrymander a riding or a province, it was not surprising that many observers grew doubtful of democracy. There is more than the loser's disappointment in Mackenzie's word to a friend a few days after his defeat in 1878: "The recent verdict has shaken my confidence in the general soundness of public opinion and has given cause to fear that an

upright administration of public affairs will not be appreciated by the mass of the people. If political criminals and political chicanery are to be preferred to such a course as we pursued, the outlook is an alarming one." Whichever of these factors is held the more weighty, there was a third of undoubled force—the constant and disturbing shift in leadership.

The Liberal party entered the Dominion field under a heavy disability. Their opponent was in power, possessed of the honey-pots of patronage; they had nothing to offer but the stern task of opposition which for years to come must be its own reward. True, when the project of Confederation was adopted, Macdonald had been steadily losing his grip on his party as well as on himself, and the government formed to carry the project through was a coalition in which the Liberals had a fair-sized share. But the coalition, and later the opportunity of patching up alliances with men from the new provinces, gave the master strategist of Canadian politics a new lease of life. Brown, with all his downright and domineering force, could not hold his own in the administration against his shrewd and supple rival; bitterly disappointed, he shook the dust of the cabinet from his feet, and the Liberal tinge soon faded out of the coalition.

From the parties which had existed in the Canadas, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Conservatives were able to build a single Dominion party, controlled by a single leader, cemented by office, and supported by the general desire that the administration in power



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should be given a fair opportunity to prove itself in the new task. Out of the fragments that remained, in the Maritime provinces based on the unstable foundation of hostility to the high-handed tactics by which Confederation had been effected, in Quebec still overwhelmed by Cartier and the clergy, in Ontario divided by the seductions of coalition, a new Liberal Opposition was formed more slowly. It was not clear who should lead this party. In the Maritime provinces Tilley had followed Tupper in swearing a lifelong alliance with Sir John, and the older champion of Liberalism, Howe, would not enter Dominion politics for the time, and when he did enter, took an uneasy seat in the government fold. In Quebec Holton and Dorion were of leadership quality, but they preferred not to undertake the task, both on personal grounds and because of their belief that the leader should come from Ontario, then the home of militant Liberalism and the province which provided the strongest contingent to the party, both in numbers and in capacity. It was to Ontario, then, that the Liberal party looked for its leader. The chief difficulty was that Ontario offered not one but many leaders.

Throughout the Union period, George Brown had dominated the Liberal party of Canada West. A fiery and uncompromising Covenanter, fierce in assault upon sectional or religious or racial or class privilege, constructive on occasion, as in his insistence upon the acquisition of the North-West and his championing of Confederation, hard-hitting in parliamentary debate, a

whirlwind force in country campaigning, a shrewd and tireless organizer, Brown had many qualities of a great party leader. But he was too impatient and too sure not only of the superiority of his own powers but of the rightness of his own opinions to be able to keep a parliamentary following contented and in line. His uncompromising bluntness wounded many a possible ally, and his unmeasured criticisms of the French-Canadian clergy and people made it hopeless for himself or for a party which he led to find substantial support in the East: "I am a governmental impossibility," he once avowed. A serious illness in 1862 robbed him of much of his vigour. His entrance into a coalition cabinet, even to carry Confederation, hurt him in some quarters and his resignation before the task was fully achieved, in others. When personal defeat came in the general elections of 1867, George Brown determined to retire from parliament. But he did not retire from politics. He was still a power behind the scenes, and through the unparalleled ascendancy in Ontario journalism of the Toronto "Globe," edited first by himself and later by his brother Gordon, he continued, if in lessening degree, to form and drive the public opinion of the province.

Alexander Mackenzie had brought his Scotch Radicalism and his dour downrightness to Canada in 1842, a year before George Brown arrived similarly freighted. But where Brown, trained to journalism, plunged at once into politics, Mackenzie, every whit as keen, had

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first to earn a living in occupations which offered less scope. He had left school at thirteen, herded and ploughed on Scottish farms, and turned stone-cutter before emigrating to Canada as a lad of twenty. When John A. Macdonald was building up his law practice in Kingston and representing that city in the provincial parliament, and Oliver Mowat and Alexander Campbell, one-time students in Macdonald's office, were beginning practice, in the same town Alexander Mackenzie was dressing or laying stone for the doorway of St. Mary's Cathedral or the Martello tower at Fort Henry, or the walls of the City Hall, attending the local temperance society, joining in the worship of the Baptist Church, or debating hotly with his fellow workmen the iniquity of the Clergy Reserves or Governor Metcalf's last stand for high toryism. Pushing farther west, in Sarnia he became in turn a prosperous contractor, an editor strong alike on principles and on personalities, and then in 1861 member for Lambton in the provincial parliament. He declined to walk into Macdonald's coalition parlour, was elected a member of the first Dominion and of the second provincial parliament, joined Blake in 1871 in overturning the government which Sir John had set up in Ontario under his clansman and former foe, John Sandfield Macdonald, became provincial treasurer under Blake as premier, and in 1872, when the abolition of dual representation forced both Blake and himself to choose between Toronto and Ottawa, decided for the federal field, but not

until he had joined Blake in setting Oliver Mowat firmly on the provincial throne that pawky chieftain was to occupy for a quarter-century.

Edward Blake came by other ways to power. His father, William Hume Blake, a member of a distinguished Irish family, had come to Canada in 1832, with a colony of kinsmen and neighbours who had combined to charter a vessel. Finding a backwoods clearing far from corresponding to his dreams of a forest estate, the elder Blake turned city man and barrister, fought on the Liberal side in the struggle for responsible government, entered the Baldwin-LaFontaine cabinet in 1848, swept the House on a memorable occasion by his fierce exposure of Tory claims to a superior loyalty, was prevented by the Speaker's intervention from fighting a duel with John A. Macdonald, became the first Chancellor of Upper Canada, and made the name of Blake a mark of honour by his high interpretation of the judge's calling. Edward Blake, born in 1833 on his father's clearing, went through the University of Toronto with high honours, was called to the bar in 1859, rose to unquestioned leadership of the equity bar almost at a stroke, became a member of both the federal and the provincial parliaments in 1867, and premier of Ontario four years later. After a year of office, he resigned the premiership to Mowat, and chose a federal career.

Mackenzie and Blake both entered public life possessed of a deeply rooted and almost hereditary Liberalism. In nearly every other respect of training, as of

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temperament, they were poles apart. Mackenzie had the self-taught man's unevenness as well as his intensity; Blake's leisurely training had given him a wider culture but less driving force. Both had extraordinary memories, but Mackenzie's was vertical, furnishing him with a store of fact and precedent as to the achievements of the good men and the lapses of the sinners through many a year of party warfare, while Blake's was horizontal, enabling him to survey with his mind's eye every present angle and every minutest detail of the most complicated issue. Mackenzie was the best debater in parliament, "a grand man on his legs," as Laurier used to say, going straight for his antagonist's weakest point with unerring keenness and unsparing stroke; Blake was its most masterful and overwhelming logician, surveying every phase of the case, fitting argument into argument and heaping up demonstration upon demonstration until his opponent sank crushed under the weight, or until the members were lost in mazes of detail; rarely, when deeply moved, passion added a force and fire to his words that burned up resistance. Mackenzie was an admirable partisan, absolutely clean, scrupulous and fair, but also absolutely convinced of the deep sinfulness of his opponents and the high righteousness of his own cause; Blake was too independent and original a man to wear any party's harness easily, and too self-absorbed for team-play. Mackenzie delighted in the fray, and never counted the odds; Blake was made for victory rather than for the fighting that brought victory. Mackenzie's nature

was transparently simple; Blake was reserved, moody, the most complex and baffling character in Canada's political history. The one had the strength and the weakness of clear-cut edges; the other, of vague horizons and margins of indefinable suggestion.

Mr. Goldwin Smith, with that thoroughgoing snobbery of which none but the Radical conscious of the condescension involved in consorting with other Radicals is capable, once remarked, in a phrase curiously reminiscent of that other Oxford don who snubbed the hopes of "Mr. Jude Pawley, stone-mason," that Mackenzie had been bred a stone-mason and that as premier a stone mason he remained. Bigger men than Smith saw in all Mackenzie's political achievements the same honest efficiency, the same plummet-straight workmanship that marked his masonry. There is on record a letter of Mackenzie to George Brown, written in 1872, which sets forth in sincere, honourable and pathetic words his sense of his own deficiencies and of Blake's strong qualities: "I know too well my own deficiencies as a political leader to wonder at other people seeing them as well. The want of early advantages was but ill compensated for by an anxious-enough effort to acquire such in the midst of a laborious life, deeply furrowed by domestic trials, and it has left me but ill-fitted to grapple with questions and circumstances constantly coming up in Parliament. I am quite aware of the advantages possessed by a leader of men, of high mental culture and having ample means, especially when joined to intellectual power and personal excellence.

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Therefore I do not wonder at, or complain of, those who see in others possessing such, greater fitness for the work required of them than myself."

The call for Blake as leader was not only a recognition of his high abilities, it was an expression of the new spirit in Canadian politics—or, more strictly speaking, in the Canadian phase of Ontario politics, for as yet even men who thought nationally thought and worked by provinces. To many men, and particularly young men, Confederation had opened up new horizons. Canada was no longer a backwoods province, it was a half-continent far on the road to nationhood, rich in opportunities which promised it high place in the world and threw on its people corresponding responsibilities. A new pride and confidence glowed in many an ardent mind. Colonial dependence gave way to national aspiration. This was the note that Thomas D'Arcy McGee had struck in urging Confederation. Brown might see in Confederation a means of solving political deadlock and securing "rep. by pop."; Macdonald, a new lease of power for himself and a new source of strength for his country; Galt might catch a glimpse of what the opening of the West would mean to the East and devote himself to working out a sound financial basis for the new Dominion, but it was McGee above all who quickened the hope of a new unity and a new reliance. "There is a name I would fain approach with befitting reverence," wrote William A. Foster in the manifesto of the "Canada First" movement in 1871, "for it casts athwart memory

the shadow of all those qualities that man admires in man. It tells of one in whom the generous enthusiasm of youth was but mellowed by the experience of cultured manhood, of one who lavished the warm love of an Irish heart on the land of his birth, yet gave a loyal and true affection to the land of his adoption; who strove with all the power of genius to convert the stagnant pool of politics into a stream of living water; who dared to be national in the face of provincial selfishness and impartially liberal in the teeth of sectarian strife; who from Halifax to Sandwich sowed broadcast the seeds of a higher national life, and with persuasive eloquence drew us closer together as a people, pointing out to each what was good in the other, wreathing our sympathies and blending our hopes; yes, one who breathed into our New Dominion the spirit of a proud self-reliance and first taught Canadians to respect themselves. Was it a wonder that a cry of agony rang throughout the land when murder foul and most unnatural drank the life-blood of Thomas D'Arcy McGee?"

National spirit brought discontent with party spirit. In the years before Confederation, political life had been degenerating into personal vendettas; parties were becoming fighting clans, public life a succession of bitter feuds. Shrieking personalities were the staple of discussion in parliament and in press. A Liberal had come to mean a man who feared and hated John A. Macdonald; a Conservative, a man who scorned and hated George Brown. Now, so many an ardent young



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man dreamed, the time had come to sweep away all these unrealities, to build afresh parties based on ideas, parties which could appeal to every province alike and not seek to impose on the new provinces the discredited leaders and labels of the old, parties that would be constructive and would stand for "Canada First."

This new nationalism found most significant expression in the writings and activities of a group which centred in Toronto, with W. H. Howland and W. A. Foster as their leaders. The Canadian National Association, in which in 1874 the more active members found definite grouping, adopted as its main planks consolidation of the Empire and a voice in treaties affecting Canada; closer trade and eventually political relations with the British West Indies; income franchise, the secret ballot, compulsory voting and minority representation; the reorganization of the Senate and abolition of property qualifications for members of the House of Commons; free homesteads; an improved militia system under command of trained Dominion officers, and the imposition of duties for revenue, so adjusted as to afford every possible encouragement to native industry. There was no little vagueness and uncertainty as to the channels in which the new nationalism was to flow. Some leaned toward economic independence through protection. Of those who emphasized political activities, some urged complete separation from Britain, others sought through imperial federation the voice in foreign affairs Canada as a mere colony was denied, while others were content, without

any formal change, to have the interests of Canada kept first and her government confided to men, whether native-born or Canadians by choice, who were Canadians through and through. In "The Nation," a weekly founded in 1874, they possessed a journal which for its brief two years of existence maintained the highest standards of independent and informed literary and political comment in the record of the Canadian press.

Distinct from these youthful crusaders, who stood ostentatiously aloof from both the old parties, there was a wing of the Liberal party with much the same ends in view, but believing that a reorganized Liberalism was the best means to that end. Men like David Mills, the "philosopher of Bothwell," and Thomas Moss, a brilliant young Toronto lawyer who entered the House in 1873, and who moved the Address on the occasion that Wilfrid Laurier seconded it, were keen to broaden the issues of party contest. Other Liberals, notably John Cameron, editor of the London "Advertiser," the "Globe's" most notable rival, chafed at the domination of the Browns, and balked at following Mackenzie because he was considered an echo of George Brown.

To men of these varied shades of thinking, Edward Blake appeared to be the leader predestined to guide Canada out of the bogs of partisanship and colonialism. He was a man of outstanding capacity and scrupulous integrity. He was a Liberal who could be liberal to new ideas and old opponents. Not least, he was a Canadian born and bred, determined to assert for his country a more distinctive place in the world's affairs.

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In the first Confederation parliament the Opposition had not chosen a leader. The different provincial groups had not yet fused into one. Dorion continued to lead the Quebec wing, while Smith and Jones marshalled the Maritime contingents. Blake was a member of the Ontario group, but as he was serving his first years of parliamentary apprenticeship, he was not yet in the running. Mackenzie, with six years of parliamentary experience and many more of party service, came to the front among the Ontario Reformers when Brown retired and McDougall joined Macdonald. He soon made his place as virtual leader of the whole party, simply because unflagging industry and interest and unsparing criticism of every Government weakness put him at the front of the fray.

In the Dominion elections of 1872 Mackenzie had charge of the Ontario campaign. He fought hard, and no small measure of the success which was won in that province was due to his campaigning. Throughout the contest Blake was absent in Europe, seeking to restore the health which overwork at the bar had impaired. Immediately upon the opening of parliament Mackenzie raised the question of a formal choice of leader. An Ontario committee, Mackenzie, Blake, W. B. Richards, Joseph Rymal, and James Young, and a Quebec committee, Dorion, Holton, Letellier, Huntington and John Young,—the Maritime members taking no concerted part,—unanimously agreed that one leader should be chosen and that he should come from Ontario. Blake was their first choice, but

though Mackenzie pressed, he declined, on the ground that it was not he who had borne the burden and heat of the electoral and parliamentary struggles. Mackenzie was then urged to accept, declined at first, in view of the general recognition of Blake's great potential powers, but at last agreed.

After eight months' service as leader of the Opposition, Mackenzie was summoned, in November, 1873, to form a ministry, after the Pacific scandal had forced the retirement of Macdonald. With much difficulty Blake was induced to enter the cabinet. He would not, however, undertake any administrative tasks, and became a minister without portfolio, an expedient then unprecedented in Canadian practice, but supported by two British instances; even so, he informed his constituents that it might not be possible for him to continue permanently in the government. His presence in the administration, however tentative, undoubtedly strengthened it in the general elections which followed in January and February, 1874. No sooner were the elections completed and a strong majority for the government assured than Blake resigned. He declared that his legal responsibilities would not permit him to continue in office, even without departmental duties, and recalled the intimations he had given during the election. His critics declined to accept this explanation at face value. Conservative editors insisted that his resignation made evident a want of confidence in Mackenzie's policy. Macdonald, in his place in the House, criticized the transaction as

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an instance of selling under false pretences: the administration had gone to the country as a Mackenzie-Blake government, it owed much of the support it received to the character and repute of the member for South Bruce; it had sold by sample, and one of the strongest claims for the cabinet cloth was that it contained a strong fibre all the way from Bruce, that would stand sun, wind or rain; now, that fibre was withdrawn before delivery, and the people were saying, "We have had palmed off upon us the same old *brown* stuff."

In October, 1874, Blake delivered a speech to a Liberal county convention at Aurora, which raised the hopes of the progressive wing and the ire of the standpatters. After developing the issues on which he was in agreement with the whole party, endorsing the efficient and economical administration of Mowat in Ontario, and urging the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway with a view to the expansion of settlement on the prairies rather than to the immediate fulfilment of the rash undertaking to pierce British Columbia's "sea of mountains," he then proceeded to suggest new fields to explore. Compulsory voting, based on the recognition of the franchise as a sacred trust; extension of the suffrage, then limited to property owners, by adding farmers' sons and income schedules; representation of minorities by some modification of the Hare system, and reform of the Senate were all urged with reasoned force. Some change in imperial relations was imperative: "Matters cannot drift much longer as they have drifted hitherto. The Treaty of

Washington produced a very profound impression throughout this country. It produced a feeling that at no distant period the people of Canada would desire that they should have some greater share of control than they now have in the management of foreign affairs. . . . This is a state of things of which you have no right to complain, because so long as you do not choose to undertake the responsibilities and burdens which attach to some share of control in these affairs, you cannot fully claim the rights and privileges of free-born Britons in such matters. . . . The time will come when that national spirit which has been spoken of will be truly felt among us, when we shall realize that we are four millions of Britons who are not free."

Blake recognized that he was departing from the usual path set for the leaders of a party when in power. "I know," he concluded, "that I have made a rather disturbing speech, but I am not afraid of that. Not much good can be done without disturbing something or somebody. I may be said also to have made an imprudent speech; at least that might be said if I were one of those who aspire to lead their fellow-countrymen as ministers. It is the function of a minister to say nothing that can be caught hold of, nothing in advance of the public opinion of the day, and to catch the current of that opinion when it has gathered strength, and crystallize it in Acts of Parliament. That is the function of a Liberal minister. The function of a Tory minister is to wait until he is absolutely forced to swallow his own opinions. It may be permitted to one who

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prefers to be a private in the advance-guard of the army of freedom to a commanding place in the main body, to run the risk of promulgating what may be a political heresy to-day and may perhaps become a political creed to-morrow."

That the suggestions thus freely thrown out were disturbing to the old guard was sufficiently indicated by the fact that the "Globe," though publishing the speeches of lesser lights delivered later in the proceedings, held over Blake's speech until an editorial counterblast could be prepared. In a series of editorials Blake's Canadian Pacific policy was endorsed, and a tribute paid to his vigour and independence, but there agreement ended. Senate reform was premature, compulsory voting a fad, the revision of imperial relations an academic issue: Canada was suffering from no injustice, conscious of no hampering and degrading influence exerted by her colonial status. Throughout the winter the discussion continued. The "Globe's" criticism was nominally directed against the Canada First group, and particularly against Goldwin Smith, the Oxford professor who had recently, after a temporary sojourn in Cornell, made Toronto his home, and who was a particularly shining and vulnerable mark because of his well-known belief that Canada must find her future in union with the United States as Scotland had found her opportunity in union with England. The "Globe" poured scorn upon the "sucking politicians," "the Canada First mischievous little snakes in the grass," "the diseased self-consciousness and absurd

pretensions of these praters of Nationalism," and upon their programme, of which "every plank was calculated to inspire sensible men with wonder if not with ridicule and contempt," and the whole likened to Milton's "asinine feast of sow thistles and brambles." The Toronto "Mail," the leading Conservative organ, gave no more sympathy; the Canada First group were "beardless boys," and their proposals "the innocent work of bumptious lads who have not cut their eye-teeth in politics." But the "Globe" was the more fierce and pertinacious, for it was its camp that was threatened; "it is the shades, not the colours that fight," as the French proverb has it.

The Blake wing of the Liberal party, finding the necessity of having a daily newspaper of their way of thinking in Toronto, established in January, 1875, the "Liberal," edited by John Cameron of the London "Advertiser." From the beginning the friction between the two guides of Liberalism was apparent, but it flamed out when the test issue of Senate reform was urged. In March, David Mills succeeded in having a resolution in favour of an elective Senate passed by the Commons by a vote of 77 to 74. Mackenzie as well as Blake, Holton, Huntington and three-fourths of the Liberals supported Mills; the others joined the Conservatives in opposition; Laurier was not present. The "Globe," not less incensed because George Brown had only the year before been appointed to the Senate, at once fell upon the proposal as a senseless tearing up of the constitution by the roots to see if it was growing;



the people wanted to let well enough alone, wanted sound administration, not constitution-mongering and change for change's sake. It sneered at Mills as a meagrely educated school-teacher whose limited success did not entitle him to speak disparagingly of the men of substance and standing who constituted the Senate, and scolded those Liberals who would interfere with the "beneficial movement" by which, as Conservative senators died off, Liberals took their place. The "Liberal" retorted that the "Globe's" criticism proved the need for a real Liberal newspaper. The "Globe" had once done good service to party and country by its outspoken advocacy of reform; to-day it was an exponent of dyed-in-the-wool Toryism, entitled to its own views, but not entitled to dictate to the party: "In the days that are now past and so long as the 'Liberal' lives shall never come again, the 'Globe' hounded down with vindictive bitterness and without permission of self-defence every Reformer who differed in opinion from it; . . . it may as well understand that the day has passed when it can decide by its mere *ipse dixit* who shall and who shall not be leaders and members of the Liberal party."

Suddenly these controversies ceased. In May, 1875, after a last display of independence in opposing Mackenzie's concession to British Columbia in the matter of the Pacific railway, Edward Blake re-entered the Mackenzie cabinet, taking the portfolio of Justice. His supporters were uncertain whether his action was a triumph or a defeat, whether it meant that he had concluded he could best revive the party from within, or

whether he had concluded to abandon his efforts altogether. It did not mean immediate harmony. The "Globe," though welcoming the return of an able minister, intimated the hope that the Council Chamber would bring a sense of responsibility which would lessen his tendency to raise disturbing abstract propositions, and found in his first speech as minister, "evidence that Mr. Blake can sink the doctrinaire in the public servant." It continued its flings at the few young and excitable Liberals who had tried but in vain to feel keenly about this and that, at their fancy grievances and their programmes which never had come home to the business and bosoms of men. The "Liberal" ceased publication, but the influence of the Blake wing was seen in the retirement shortly afterward of Gordon Brown from the editorship of the "Globe," and the appointment of John Cameron in his stead.

For two years Blake served as Minister of Justice. The post was particularly congenial in that it gave scope for his mastery of constitutional principles and his policy of extending Canada's national powers. In a series of controversies with the Colonial Office, Blake stood firmly for carrying the principles of responsible government to their logical conclusion. He protested vigorously against a revision of the governor-general's instructions to conform with those designed for Crown colonies, making the governor-general once more what he had long ceased to be, a member of the working executive, and authorizing him to act independently of his advisers. He pressed for the

abandonment of the instructions requiring the governor-general to reserve for the consideration of the British government bills on certain subjects enacted by the Canadian parliament. He contended that the prerogative of pardon should be exercised by the governor-general, as in the case of other powers, on ministerial advice. He insisted that the power of disallowing provincial statutes was vested by the British North America Act in the governor-general in Council, that is, the cabinet, not in the governor-general acting on his own discretion or under London advice. In each and all he won his point, and contributed materially to the recognition of Canada's national status. In all these measures he had the warm support of Mackenzie, though when it came to discussions of a more sweeping change in imperial relations, Mackenzie had little sympathy with Blake's tentative acceptance of imperial federation.

In June, 1877, once more on the ground of ill-health, Blake resigned his portfolio and took the nominal post of President of the Council. Six months later, he retired from the cabinet altogether. Mackenzie repeatedly offered to make way for him. "From the first," he wrote in 1877, "I was more willing to serve than to reign, and would even now be gladly relieved from a position the toils of which no man can appreciate who has not had the experience. I pressed Mr. Blake in November, 1874, to take the lead, and last winter I again urged him to do so, and this summer I offered to go out altogether, or serve under him, as he might

deem best in the general interest." But Blake would neither consent to displace Mackenzie nor rest content as his follower.

It was not merely in the party as a whole that difficulties of leadership arose. The Quebec wing of the party had troubles of its own. While Mr. Laurier shared in the interest in the Blake-Mackenzie duel, he was more immediately concerned in the leadership of the Liberal contingent from his own province.

Quebec was the government's weakest quarter. The tidal wave of repudiation of the Macdonald government had increased the Quebec Liberal representation from 27 out of 65 to 33, but leaders were lacking and the allegiance of several of the rank and file uncertain. Antoine Aimé Dorion, for twenty years the Rouge chieftain and the leader of the Quebec bar, was retiring from politics. He had established a reputation beyond cavil for integrity and single-minded devotion to the country's interest, and carried weight not only in Quebec but throughout the Dominion. Yet his heart was not in the game of politics; he could never throw himself into the battles of the hustings or take delight in parliamentary intrigues with the whole-hearted abandon of his opponent, Cartier. Twenty years of public life had left him not only poor but heavily in debt, and the wishes of his family weighed heavily against the demands of his party. Six months after taking office in the Mackenzie cabinet, and a year after death had carried Cartier off the scene, Antoine Dorion resigned to become Chief Justice of Quebec.

His colleague, Letellier de Saint-Just, was a man of average ability, and of much more than average determination and sense of dignity; he had won a place by his persistent fighting of the Rouge battles in eastern Quebec since 1851, and was destined after he too resigned in 1876 in order to take the lieutenant-governorship of Quebec, to become the occasion of a famous constitutional crisis. Téléphore Fournier, who held in turn the portfolios of Inland Revenue, Justice and the Post-Office, was a man of greater capacity, who for years had carried on a vigorous but hopeless fight in the Quebec district against Conservative and clerical, only winning his way to the Commons when too firmly set in his ways to be able to repeat in the House the success he had won at the bar. Fournier resigned in 1875 to become a member of the Canadian Supreme Court which he had taken the leading part in establishing. Dorion's place was taken by Felix Geoffrion, who proved a very good administrator, and when a serious illness forced him to resign in 1876, Rodolphe Laflamme, Mr. Laurier's one-time preceptor in the law, and another uncompromising Rouge champion, succeeded, only to meet Fournier's difficulty of adjusting himself to the ways of parliament. Letellier's post as Minister of Agriculture was taken by C. A. P. Pelletier, an urbane gentleman who found his place at the same time in the Senate. When Fournier retired, Mackenzie, hard put for a successor, made a choice difficult to reconcile with his own character and his party's traditions. For thirty years Joseph Cauchon had been active in public life, vigorous

in parliamentary debate, and in his newspaper, "Le Journal de Québec," as slashing, aggressive and powerful as George Brown himself. He had been an uncompromising Conservative and a thoroughgoing upholder of clerical claims until shortly after Confederation, when disappointed ambition and quarrels over railway projects set him adrift from his old friends. He was a man of unquestioned force, and still a power with the clergy. Mackenzie's action in offering him a cabinet seat might have been defended had it not been for his reputation for corruption. A parliamentary inquiry in 1872 had branded him as secretly interested in government contracts with the Beauport Asylum while himself a member of the provincial legislature. Sir John Macdonald might have appointed him, and the Opposition could not have shouted "robbery and corruption" louder than they were already and always doing, but for God-fearing, broad-phylacteried Liberals, and particularly a man so personally upright and so impatient of dishonour as Mackenzie, the appointment was a fatal blunder. It was with relief that many Liberals saw Cauchon accept the lieutenant-governorship of Manitoba in 1877, and make way for Wilfrid Laurier.

These kaleidoscopic and unsettling changes, the appointment of member after member to the cabinet only to leave it for a safer and more profitable billet, and the unfortunate selection of Cauchon, prevented the Liberal party from building up a strong position in French-speaking Quebec. Nor was the position wholly satisfactory with regard to the leadership of the English-

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speaking Liberals of the province. Luther Holton, who had entered politics after making a comfortable fortune out of the building of a section of the Grand Trunk Railway, had for many years been the Liberals' financial expert, and a man of weight and judgment in the party councils. Yet the claims of Huntington, who had launched the Pacific charges which had driven the Conservatives from office, could not be denied. Holton continued to give Mackenzie support that was unswervingly loyal, but not as effective as if he had been within the cabinet, while Huntington's somewhat easy-going ways lessened the contribution his independent turn of mind and vigorous power of debate might otherwise have made.

Writing in the summer of 1874 to James Young, Mr. Laurier comments on the party situation in his own province:

I am now busy with courts and judges and have been so ever since the close of the session. I argued a case some time ago, in the Court of Appeal, before the new Chief Justice, Dorion. He is an admirable judge, but as you truly say, his absence greatly weakens the cabinet.

We, the Lower Canada Reformers, claim that we have acted like patriots in this matter: we have unhesitatingly sacrificed our party to our province. Dorion's appointment to the bench is an irretrievable loss to our party, but it is an incalculable advantage to our province. The bench of the province, for many years past, has been every day more and more sinking into contempt and scorn. Dorion was the very man to raise it up again to its former position. His accession to the high office of Chief Justice has been hailed by all classes and creeds in Lower Canada.

But to us as a party, it is a loss which cannot be made up.

## LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER

We have no man in Quebec who can lead the party. Fournier is not that one; Letellier still less. The man who will come nearest to the point is Geoffrion. Geoffrion has many good qualities: he is clever, shrewd, smooth, and understands human nature thoroughly. Were there more in him of the speaker or the thinker, he would make a consummate leader. Such as he is, he will be our leader, and it is well that it should be so. He will perhaps not do as much for the fame of the party as one would desire, but he will do more for rooting the party in the people than any other one could do.

Writing to the same correspondent in October, 1876, Mr. Laurier refers to the situation as it had developed in the two years intervening:

First let me give you the information you ask. As to myself, I am perfectly well. My health, which has always been delicate, is getting decidedly better and better. I hope to see the day when I shall be as fat and rosy as my friend Mousseau.

I wish I could speak as cheerfully of the political situation in this province. But the plain, unvarnished truth is that our party is going to the dogs in Quebec. I am fully convinced that the next elections will make a terrible sweep in our ranks. . . . Now, you ask me, what is the cause of our going down? The cause is not uniform all through the province. In the cities, the protection cry is hurting us; there can be no doubt of it, especially in Montreal. . . . The great cause of our weakness is the old everlasting one: the hostility of the priests. . . . But there is another cause which, within the ranks of the Liberal party itself, is doing us more harm than clerical hostility. Our government is sorely disappointing our friends. Notwithstanding priestly tyranny, the Liberal party, so long as it was in opposition, could and did count upon a vigorous minority. It was composed of men at once enthusiastic and disinterested. When the Conservatives were turned out, the expectations of our people were at once raised to a high pitch. They expected, they were sure, that the new government would at once enter upon a career of reforms, and that the abuses



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which had grown up under Conservative rule would be crushed down. I am free to admit that amongst the illiterate class, many of these expectations were absurd, and that what in their eyes were abuses were administrative necessities. However, the fact is there, we have done nothing. Except the creation of the Supreme Court, we have not passed a law of any importance, and the idea of the Supreme Court is not ours. I certainly admire the great qualities of Mackenzie, but he has no zest to carry a party on. His policy is at once cautious and honest, but it is not progressive.

After all, I am French, and you will perhaps think that my French nature unconsciously makes me long for a little bit of revolutionary excitement, but I do not believe so. We must give something to public opinion, or we die. Our adversaries can and do prey upon prejudices; they keep their people together by a constant appeal to prejudices. While we were in opposition, we always had schemes and devices to discuss and suggest, but now we do nothing, and the reproach which I often hear amongst the Rouges is this: what difference is there between this and the late government? Still the Rouges will not go over to the other side; that is quite certain, but they will not fight. And it seems to me that even in Ontario, in the great centre of Reform and Liberalism, reform and liberalism are not in the ascendancy.

With us, however, it is still worse. You have strong men in the cabinet, but we are weak. I of course except Huntington, of whom I think a great deal. I except also poor Geof-frion, though he is perhaps forever lost. I refer to the other two. I refer to them without any comment, because you know them. I should, however, judge that you do not know them, since you believe that they will think of retiring. As to Cauchon, he never will think of going out as long as he will not have brought the government into some dirty and disgraceful scrape. It is of no use to speculate who will be their successor. A more appropriate question would be, who shall be tall David's [David Laird's] successor? Will it be yourself, or Mills or John McDonald? The gods keep their secret, as

yet, but two things which are now known give me unbounded pleasure: the next man will be an Ontario man and he will be an up and down Grit. . . .

Aside from difficulties as to leadership, and in Quebec the hostile attitude of an important section of the clergy, the Liberal party in the seventies faced three serious issues, the Riel agitation, the demand of the West for the speedy construction of the Pacific railway, and the world-wide trade depression which brought a revival of protectionism in its wake.

The Riel agitation was an unfortunate aftermath of Canada's bungling in handling its first difficult task of national expansion. The development of the American West had long directed attention to the possibilities of the vast British territory to the northward, under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company. For years before Confederation Brown and McDougall had urgently demanded that Canada should acquire this heritage, to which the enterprise of French-Canadian explorers under the old régime gave the province some legal claim. With the enlarged resources and the new national aspirations that Confederation brought, the dream of westward expansion became real. Within four years after 1867, the bounds of the Dominion had been extended to the Pacific, and its territory multiplied eightfold.

When, in 1870-71, the Dominion government provided for the entry of British Columbia into the federation, the negotiations were conducted with the representatives of the Pacific colony's ten thousand white settlers on a footing of equality, and generous, even extravagant

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terms, including the promise to build a railway through trackless wastes to the Pacific within ten years, were offered. When, two years earlier, the same government had sought to bring the vast territory between the Great Lakes and the Rockies under its sway, it paid no heed to the wishes of the twelve thousand whites and half-breeds gathered in the valley of the Red River. Negotiations were carried on with the British government and the governors of the Hudson's Bay Company; money was paid to extinguish the company's rights, but no step was taken to discuss with the people of the country the terms under which they and their lands were to be transferred to a new allegiance.

The situation was one that needed care. With the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company steadily slipping from its grasp, and its representatives on the spot convinced that the financial magnates in London had sacrificed the working partners, and therefore unwilling to exert themselves to aid the establishment of the new régime; with half the community made up of French half-breeds, used to the free life of voyageur, buffalo-hunter or transport-driver, and apprehensive of a flood of alien and disdainful immigrants unsettling their old ways of life; with thousands of Scottish half-breeds, less unruly, but dubious also of newcomers; with a Canadian colony already in the settlement, urging for years annexation to Canada, and some of its members foolishly boasting how the backward elements would have to make way when the tide of progressive Canadian settlers poured in; with priests like Father Ritchot in

full and active sympathy with the fears and hopes of their parishioners; with Minnesota traders and professional Fenian raiders across the border anxious to swing the settlement into the American orbit, it was imperative to take steps to ensure the Red River settlement a voice in its own future governing. No such steps were taken, and the action of the Canadian government in starting surveys in half-breed settlements before the transfer, and the greedy staking out of lands by members of official missions gave positive ground for alarm.

Out of this friction and muddle conflict rapidly developed. Many men played a part in the succession of blunders and misunderstandings which marked the interregnum between the rule of the company and the rule of Canada. Joseph Howe, long leader of Nova Scotia's fight against being coerced into Confederation, now won over to acquiescence and a seat in the cabinet, with special charge of the Western Territories, paid a flying visit to Red River in the fall of 1869, and whether merely through declining to take sides with the Canadian faction or because, in McDougall's words, of "seditious talk and bibulous fraternization with rebels," undoubtedly encouraged resistance. William McDougall, appointed lieutenant-governor of the territory he had done more than any other man to keep before the mind of Canada, reached Pembina before the formal transfer of the territory to the Dominion, only to be blocked at the border by a French half-breed band, and there held, fuming and fretting, issuing unwarranted proclamations and rashly seeking to rouse the English settlers

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against the "rebels," until, disavowed and embittered, he was forced to return to Ottawa. Governor McTavish, of the Hudson's Bay Company, ill, resentful of the change, convinced that annexation to the United States was inevitable, supinely bowed to the insurgents' every demand. Louis Riel, a native of the settlement, educated at Montreal for the priesthood but drawn by his wayward temper and heterodox views into other paths, now made himself the champion of the half-breeds' cause, broke up the surveyors' operations, blocked McDougall's entry, seized, without resistance, Fort Garry and the company stores, and set up a provisional government. "Abandoned by our own government, which had sold its title to this country," he declared, they must refuse to accept "a governor whom Canada, an English colony like ourselves, ignoring our aspirations and our existence as a people, forgetting the rights of nations and our rights as British subjects, sought to impose upon us without consulting or even notifying us." William O'Donoghue, a student for the priesthood, of strong Fenian leanings, plotting annexation, and Ambroise Lepine, a half-breed of herculean build and more moderation of temper, backed Riel.

The government at Ottawa, awakened by this unexpected resistance, took a conciliatory attitude, sending commissioners, in turn Colonel de Salaberry, Vicar-General Thibault, Donald A. Smith and Bishop Taché, hastily summoned from Rome to shepherd his wandering flock, to explain their benevolent intentions, and agreeing to receive delegates from the settlement.

Meanwhile Riel's authority had been challenged by a group of Canadians who fortified the house of their leader, Dr. Schultz, and later by a badly organized band of English settlers. Both movements failed. The second was particularly unfortunate, coming just when the great majority of the old settlers, English as well as French, had come together in a convention to support the demand for terms, and when Donald A. Smith's extremely cautious diplomacy had undermined Riel's authority. The challenge and its failure increased Riel's prestige and, what was more ominous, inflamed his erratic temper. To strike a lesson home he haled one of the prisoners before a court martial and after a farcical trial had him brutally shot. It was a fateful blunder. The blood of Thomas Scott called for vengeance. Ontario insisted that no truce or terms could be made with murderers; Quebec, that the execution was a political act, not to be held against individuals. The cabinet at Ottawa tried to follow a double course. To meet Ontario's demands it sent an armed expedition under Colonel Wolseley to enforce order. To satisfy Quebec, it discussed terms with the delegates from the North-West, Judge Black, Father Ritchot and A. H. Scott, and agreed to grant the community the status of a province, the half-breeds generous holdings of land or scrip, and the Church its schools. By the fall of 1870 all was quiet on the Red River.

Peace did not so soon follow in eastern Canada. Here was ample tinder to relight the fires of sectarian and racial controversy. Ontario saw only that an On-

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tario man, and an Orangeman at that, had been brutally murdered at the command of a French Catholic "rebel." Quebec saw only a struggle for the assertion of just rights against scornful neglect, in which the execution by constituted authority of a troublesome prisoner was an unfortunate but minor incident. Nor was this all. Below the individual issues and the specific incidents of the conflict there waged a clash of wills as to the national future of the West. Ontario, aware of its superior enterprise, eager to find an outlet for home-seekers to rival the Western States, and deeply suspicious of French and Catholic Quebec, looked for the building up of new Ontarios in the vast prairies. Quebec, disappointed at finding its position under Confederation less influential than had been hoped, proudly mindful that it was daring French-Canadian explorers who had opened up the Western country, and anxious to stem the tide of habitant migration to New England mills, equally naturally hoped that a French-Canadian province would arise in the West to redress the balance.

The specific issue was the punishment of those responsible for the death of Scott. For years this question bedeviled Canadian politics. Both parties sought to turn to political account the passions it raised and both found that it was easier to arouse passion than to allay it. The Liberals of Ontario, themselves carried away by the popular indignation against Riel, or unable to resist the temptation to turn the normally Conservative Orange vote against the government, denounced Macdonald for trafficking with treason, and even so cautious

and judicial a man as Edward Blake, on becoming premier of Ontario in 1871, carried a resolution through the local house offering a reward of \$5,000 for the arrest of any or all of the slayers of Scott. The Liberals of Quebec, equally pleased to be able for once to have popular prejudice on their side, attacked the government for not granting unconditional amnesty for all the incidents in a conflict for which that government was itself mainly to blame. Macdonald was still more adroit at this double game, exclaiming to an Ontario audience, "Where is Riel? God knows: I wish I could lay my hands on him," at the very time that his agents were paying Riel and Lepine secret service money to induce them to keep out of the country and avert the crisis their arrest would bring. After the fall of the Macdonald government had transferred to Mackenzie the responsibility for pardoning the offenders—the responsibility for taking action against them lay with the provincial government—the Conservative forces in Ontario and Quebec were free to follow the tactics of their opponents in attacking from diametrically opposite directions. The Maritime provinces were throughout little concerned in what was virtually a Quebec-Ontario duel, and in Manitoba itself, where the races were evenly balanced, politicians walked much more warily than in the provinces where one could safely bluster to sympathetic majorities.

Controversy raged as to whether an amnesty for offences before the territory was formally incorporated lay within the jurisdiction of the imperial or of the



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Canadian government, and as to whether it had been explicitly or implicitly promised. It was urged that Bishop Taché, when sent as the federal government's commissioner, had been authorized to promise amnesty, but it was replied that the execution of Scott did not occur until after Mgr. Taché had left Ottawa, though before he reached Fort Garry. It was urged that on a later visit to Ottawa, Mgr. Taché had been assured pardon for all offenders by the governor-general and by Cartier, then acting premier; and while there was some misunderstanding as to these interviews, it was proved that Cartier at least had given strong assurances. The reception of the delegates from the settlement was held to constitute a recognition of the provisional government, though in reply Macdonald insisted the delegates were not from Riel but from the Convention. Riel's retirement in 1872 from the electoral contest in the Manitoba constituency of Provencher to make way for Cartier, defeated in Montreal, was another incident difficult to explain away. Finally, the action of Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, McDougall's successor, in asking and receiving the aid of Riel and Lepine in repelling a threatened Fenian invasion of Manitoba in 1871, was held to wipe out all old scores.

Two incidents brought the issue to a head. In 1873, after long obstruction by those in authority, warrants were issued for the arrest of Riel and Lepine, who had returned to Red River. Riel escaped; Lepine stood his trial, and in November, 1874, was condemned to death. Earlier in the year, Riel, who had been elected for

Provencher after Cartier's death, made his way east, and when parliament opened in March, crossed the river from Hull, presented himself at the office of the Clerk of the House, took the oath, signed the roll and walked out before the astounded clerk realized who stood before him. Then after a canny but unsuccessful attempt to collect his mileage, Riel disappeared. On April 15 Mackenzie Bowell, a leading Ontario Conservative and Orange Grand Master, seconded by Dr. Schultz, now member for Lisgar, moved the expulsion of Riel as a fugitive from justice. Luther Holton, seconded by Malcolm Cameron, moved an amendment to suspend proceedings pending the report of the committee lately appointed to inquire into the claim that a full amnesty had been promised or implied by the late government or its representatives. J. A. Mousseau and L. F. Baby, Quebec Conservatives, moved as an amendment to the amendment that an address be issued for a full and immediate amnesty.

The issue thus raised cut across party lines. Members of the cabinet took opposite sides. Ontario and Quebec lined up in more clear-cut opposition than on any other vote in parliament before that day. Only one Ontario member voted against the motion for Riel's expulsion, which was carried by 123 to 68; Holton's amendment was lost by 76 to 117, and Mousseau's, which was supported only by Quebec Conservatives, by 27 to 164.

Mr. Laurier had made his first speech in the House of Commons on the day of Riel's hurried visit, second-

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ing, in French, the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. He decided to take part in the Riel debate, and to speak in English, in order to make his position clear to the majority of the House. "I must apologize to the House," he began, "for using a language with which I am only imperfectly acquainted; really, I should claim a complete amnesty, because I know only too surely that in the course of the few remarks I wish to make, I shall frequently murder the Queen's English."

The greater part of the speech was devoted to the question whether in presuming to act in a judicial capacity, the House had observed the rules of judicial proof. No evidence had been formally offered that an indictment had been laid against the member for Provencher or a true bill returned against him. It had, indeed, been shown that a bench warrant had been issued, but where was the proof that he was contumacious, that the sheriff had tried to execute the warrant and had failed? In the leading British precedent, Saddler's case, the necessity for complying strictly with all the requirements of legal procedure had been fully recognized. Mr. Laurier continued:

It will be argued, perhaps, that the reasons which I advance are pure legal subtleties. Name them as you please, technical expressions, legal subtleties, it matters little; for my part, I say that these technical reasons, these legal subtleties, are the guarantees of British liberty. Thanks to these technical expressions, these legal subtleties, no person on British soil can be arbitrarily deprived of what belongs to him. There was a time when the procedure was much simpler than it is to-day, when the will alone of one man was sufficient to deprive another

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of his liberty, his property, his honour and all that makes life dear. But since the days of the Great Charter, never has it been possible on British soil to rob a man of his liberty, his property or his honour except under the safeguard of what has been termed in this debate technical expressions and legal subtleties. . . .

But there is more than all this. The member for Provencher has always asserted that the old administration had promised him an amnesty for all the acts in which he had taken part in Manitoba prior to the admission of that province into the Confederation. He has reiterated that assertion twenty times, perhaps. Called upon over and over again to declare what there was in this alleged promise of amnesty, to state simply yes or no, it has never been willing to say yes or no. I regard this obstinate silence of the old administration as an absolute confirmation of the pretensions of Mr. Riel and his friends; it is a case of silence giving consent.

Well, if this be the case, if the member for Provencher was promised an amnesty for all the acts which he may have committed in Manitoba while at the head of the provincial government, is it surprising that he should not want to submit to those who now wish to drag him before the courts for those same acts? Is he not warranted in so acting? Is he not right in so doing in order that the promise of amnesty made to him in the Queen's name may be carried out?

No, sir, as long as this question of the amnesty has not been cleared up, I for one shall never declare that this man is a fugitive from his country's justice. Moreover, this question will be soon elucidated, as no later than last week we named a committee to enquire into it. This committee is sitting at this moment and the House, in my opinion, would do not only a culpable but an illogical and inconsistent act, if it came to any decision affecting this question from near or far until it has received the report of the committee. . . .

After making it clear that he would vote against the

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amendment for an immediate amnesty on the same ground, he continued:

I am in favour of the amnesty for two reasons. The first is that given last night by the honourable member for South Ontario [Mr. Cameron], that the Canadian government received the delegates of Mr. Riel's government and treated with him as one power treats with another power. . . . I am in favour of the amnesty for still another reason—because all the acts with which Mr. Riel is charged are purely political acts. It was said here yesterday that the execution of Scott was a crime; granted, but it was a political act. Mr. Riel in signing the warrant for Scott's execution did nothing but give effect to the sentence of a court. However illegal may have been that court, however iniquitous may have been the sentence rendered by that court, the fact alone that it was rendered by a court and that that court existed *de facto* was sufficient to impart an exclusively political character to the execution.

It has been said that Mr. Riel was only a rebel. How is it possible to use such language? What act of rebellion did he commit? Did he ever raise any other standard than the national flag? Did he ever proclaim any other authority than the sovereign authority of the Queen? No, never. His whole crime and the crime of his friends was that they wanted to be treated like British subjects and not to be bartered away like common cattle. If that be an act of rebellion, where is the one amongst us who if he had happened to have been with them would not have been rebels as they were? Taken all in all, I would regard the events at Red River in 1869-70 as constituting a glorious page in our history, if unfortunately they had not been stained with the blood of Thomas Scott. But such is the state of human nature and of all that is human: good and evil are constantly intermingled; the most glorious cause is not free from impurity and the vilest may have its noble side.

The speech could not turn the House from its pur-

pose, nor satisfy the extremists in either province, but its forceful logic and its pointed phrase established Mr. Laurier's reputation in the new field as firmly as earlier at Quebec. A different angle is presented in a very frank letter written in September, 1874, to his friend Young:

We in the province of Quebec feel rather anxious about this amnesty question. It is not that we have any sympathy for those whom this amnesty is intended to cover. They are not now, nor ever shall be, whatever we may do for them, our friends or allies. But when we were fighting the old enemy, and making a weapon of everything at our hand, we took this Riel question and kindled the enthusiasm of the people for him and his friends, in order to damage the old Administration, who were doing nothing for his relief. On the other hand, at the same time you were working the other way in your province, pitching into the government for not bringing to justice these same men. So the duplicity of the government and its double game were a two-edged weapon in our and your hands.

We can now admit that both in Ontario and Quebec we have been imprudent in intensifying the feelings of the people as we have done. But without recriminating on the past, we have to look squarely at the situation.

There is but one solution. Either we must yield to you, or you must yield to us. Either we must bring the accused to trial or must grant an amnesty.

You might say that we should yield, because you are the strongest. I do not believe so; you must adopt our policy, because it is the more liberal policy, and because it must some day be finally adopted; its adoption is only a question of time. Since, therefore, we must come to it some day, better to make up our mind at once and act accordingly.

What I would suggest would be the following: that the Ontario legislature be called early this fall, that the local elections should be brought early next winter, say in January, and that

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the federal parliament be called only when they are over. If this plan were adopted, the ministry would not be fettered by the coming local elections during the session. It would be left to act according to the best interests of the country and the party, and if it had to countenance any unpopular measure, we would have four years before us to work away the bad feeling. Perhaps you do not think much of this amnesty question in Ontario, but to us here it is of the greatest importance.

It may have been only a coincidence; but it is worth noting that the Ontario legislature was called that fall, in November, that the Ontario elections were brought on in January, and that the federal house was called in February.

The question continued to trouble parliament for three years longer. Early in 1875 the governor-general, Lord Dufferin, acting on his own responsibility, commuted Lepine's death-sentence to two years' imprisonment. The government, while doubtless not unwilling to be freed from the thorny task of itself advising action, could not on constitutional grounds recognize the claim of the governor-general to independent authority, and in 1878 Blake succeeded in establishing his contention that the prerogative of pardoning, like other prerogatives of the Crown, was to be exercised by the governor-general on the advice of his responsible ministers. In February, 1875, Mackenzie, on the ground that the government was committed by the actions of its predecessor and of the provincial authorities, moved a full amnesty to all persons concerned in the North-West troubles, saving only Riel, Lepine and O'Donoghue; Riel and Lepine were to be amnestied

after five years' banishment, but O'Donoghue, who had participated in the Fenian Raid of 1871, was excluded. At the same time, on Mackenzie's motion, Riel, who had been re-elected for Provencher, was adjudged an outlaw for felony, on the basis of a sentence passed by the Chief Justice of Manitoba, and his seat vacated. This solution was approved by all parties except the Quebec Conservatives, who demanded immediate and complete amnesty.

In supporting the government's course, Mr. Laurier insisted that the question could not be settled unless settled in a spirit of leniency: "History has proved to us that there has never been peace or harmony in any country until a free pardon has been given for all offences of this kind." It was not a question to be decided according to race or religion; all had their preferences, but must not be carried away by them. Members of parliament were representatives of the Canadian people, to give justice to whom it was due, without bias or favour. He believed that a full amnesty should have been granted, but as the imperial government had advised otherwise, there was nothing to be said. This solution had the further advantage of being a compromise between Ontario and Quebec; it should have the effect of burying the past in oblivion and promoting a sentiment of mutual self-respect between the two great provinces of the Dominion. And so, for the time, Riel passed off the political scene.

Long before the controversies over the incidents in



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Canada's assumption of sovereignty in the West had ended, the question of developing this vast heritage had become pressing. Development meant first and foremost railway-building. The Macdonald government had agreed in 1871, as a condition of the entrance of British Columbia into Confederation, to begin in two years and complete in ten, the construction of a railway to the Pacific coast. There were strong national reasons for hastening to make the West one and make it Canadian, but none the less it was a rash undertaking. Canada then held fewer than four million people, of whom only one hundred thousand, chiefly Indians, lived west of the Great Lakes. Between old Ontario and the prairies there stretched for nearly a thousand miles a rocky and forest-clad Northern wilderness. On the Pacific coast, a "sea of mountains" threatened to make the work of surveying slow and the work of construction costly. It was not surprising that difficulty was experienced in carrying the agreement through parliament, and still greater difficulty in carrying it into effect. When the Macdonald government left office in 1873, construction had not been begun, and the collapse of the company headed by Allan, to which a charter and a large subsidy had been granted, as a result both of political exposures and money-market indifference, compelled a fresh start by the new administration.

Mackenzie was a man of cautious temperament. Times were hard, and after the collapse of the Northern Pacific and other American roads in 1873, money was

not easy to borrow for a wilderness project. Most people in the East believed the original agreement with British Columbia a rash and unnecessary concession. The question of the best route to follow required long investigation and much debate. He therefore announced a policy of thorough survey and gradual construction, connecting the Red River settlement with United States lines, beginning building in British Columbia, and utilizing the water stretches—the Great Lakes, the river system from Lake Superior to the Red River, and the Saskatchewan system beyond. Then, as settlement progressed and funds permitted, the gaps could be filled in. Preferably the work should be done by a private company, liberally bonused; this failing, by the government itself.

Mackenzie's policy had much to commend it, given the formidable character of the task, the slender financial resources of the country, and the hard times that afflicted all the world in the seventies. But it did not make a strong appeal to popular imagination, nor give sufficient weight to the national considerations which called for welding East and West together as speedily as could be done if the hardly won unity of the map was ever to become a reality. "The opening by us first of a North Pacific Railroad," a naïvely frank United States Senate Committee had declared in 1869, "seals the destiny of the British possessions west of the 91st meridian; they will become so Americanized in interests and feelings that they will be in effect severed from the new Dominion, and the question of their annexation will be but

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a question of time." The settlers or speculators in the West protested against compromise or delay with a vehemence inversely in proportion to their numbers. An adverse party majority in the Senate blocked one promising solution. When, therefore, the Mackenzie government left office in 1878, though elaborate surveys had been effected and construction begun in east, west, and centre, and the Red River practically linked with the roads to the south, there was a general feeling that the administration had not scored success in its handling of the railway question.

The fiscal issue was still more thorny. The Mackenzie government was unfortunate in taking office just when the whole continent was entering upon a period of prolonged and disastrous depression, and in leaving office just on the eve of the return of prosperity. In the United States, reaction from the outburst of speculation and railway-building which had followed the close of the Civil War and the rapid opening of the West, and in Europe, reaction from the hectic prosperity of the Franco-Prussian War period, had brought sharp financial crisis and enervating industrial depression. Canada could not escape. Exports and imports declined. Bankruptcies and soup-kitchens multiplied. The federal revenue, derived mainly from duties on imports, declined. A demand that soon became irresistible arose for a higher tariff, to fill the treasury chests and protect home industry from being made a "slaughter-market."

Hitherto the tariff had not been a party issue. The

example of the United States had stirred up many eager advocates of protection, but they were found in both parties. The Liberals, in so far as they had been influenced by the traditions of English Liberalism, were the more inclined to free trade, but politicians of both parties had preferred to find safety in the compromise of "tariff for revenue with incidental protection." Now a more clear-cut position was demanded. The industrial depression converted many to desperate remedies. The financial stringency, in spite of all that Mackenzie and his Finance Minister, Richard Cartwright, could do in the way of economies, demanded new sources of revenue. The failure of the United States Senate to pass a wide and statesmanlike treaty of reciprocity which George Brown had negotiated on behalf of the Mackenzie government in 1874, quickened the demand for retaliation, for "reciprocity of trade or reciprocity of tariffs." The national sentiment stirred by Confederation, which at first had urged many toward political independence, now was diverted into industrial channels and gave protection the guise of a "national policy" as well as an individual benefit. It was significant that the "Canada First" group in Toronto, and the Parti National into which the Liberals of Quebec had been for a short time transformed, leaned strongly toward protection.

The issue came to a head in 1876. In the preceding year the government had increased the main fifteen per cent schedules of the tariff by two and a half per cent. Now the question was whether it should accede to the

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protectionists' demands and raise the rates another two and a half per cent. It seemed probable that the increase would be made. Cartwright favoured it; Liberal members from industrial centres insisted upon it; the "Globe" forecast it as certain. Then at the last moment, under pressure from a deputation of Maritime-province members who protested against any further increase in the cost of goods they consumed but did not produce, Mackenzie, not unwilling to be urged in the direction whither his own convictions led, decided against any change. The astounded Conservative leaders, who had been prepared to take the opposite tack, floundered for a few hours, and then swung round to a demand for protection, or rather a "readjustment" of the tariff.

Mr. Laurier's position was not an easy one. His Quebec opponents cast up to him the protectionist tendencies of the Parti National in 1871. Mr. Masson quoted abundantly from his speech on the address in the Quebec legislature—"the most significant, the best and the most eloquent speech of all." Mr. Laurier frankly admitted the charge. "I do not deny that I have been a protectionist, which I am still, but I am a moderate protectionist and the honourable member [M. Masson] is an extreme protectionist." It was not a party issue. True, in England the Liberal party had stood for freedom of trade, but the Conservatives had accepted the same policy. "We find the Liberal party of France divided. While Thiers is an intense protectionist, Gambetta and Say are both free traders. The Conservatives of France, and the great body of Conservatives of

Lower Canada, do not trouble themselves about anything except saving their own souls and cursing the souls of other people. In the United States the Liberal party is intensely protectionist and the Conservative or Democratic party free trade. . . . In our own country the Liberal party is far from being a unit on this subject. We have consistent and lifelong Liberals on both sides. As to the Conservatives, I am not aware that until very recently the party had a policy on the question; at least their leaders never avowed any. It is true from what we have seen in the House that the great mass of the party seems to be protectionist, but it is equally true they have only within two or three days come to adopt that policy openly, probably in justification of the well-known saying that a political party, like a fish, is moved by its tail."

While free trade was probably the ultimate goal of most countries, still "protection," Mr. Laurier continued, "is a matter of necessity for a young nation, in order that it may attain the full development of its own resources. . . . If I were in Britain I would avow free trade, but I am a Canadian born and resident, and I think that we require protection. But to what extent do we need it? . . . I consider that the present tariff affords sufficient protection. . . . The depression is not particular to this country, but is universal and affects highly protected as well as free-trade countries. Then will it be pretended that an increase in the tariff will restore prosperity?"

The government was sustained by a large majority

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in the House, but its position in the country steadily grew weaker. Instead of the improvement in trade on which the government had counted, they had to face a succession of bad harvests in 1876, 1877 and 1878. It was true that Canada could do little to restore prosperity so long as the United States and Europe were depressed, but when Cartwright frankly admitted that ministers were but "flies upon the wheel," the cry for more vigorous action and for men more optimistic in their promises grew stronger in every province.

The legislative programme of the Mackenzie government was far from negligible. It introduced voting by ballot, ended the pernicious system by which elections were spread over weeks or months, passed a strong Corrupt Practices Act, and transferred the settlement of controverted elections from parliament to the courts. It established the Canadian Supreme Court, the Royal Military College and the North-West Mounted Police. It passed the Scott Act, providing for local county option in prohibiting the sale of intoxicants. Its administrative record was strong and clean. Yet fortune was against it. Honest administration could not satisfy a country calling for a stronger stimulant. The very virtues of the administration told against it. Mackenzie had taken upon himself the heavy duties of Minister of Public Works, a department which then included railways. He "kept the thieves away from the Treasury with a shot-gun," but he broke down his own health and neglected his duties as party leader.

Wilfrid Laurier joined the administration when it was

already drifting to defeat. His eloquence and his character had marked him out for the leadership of the Liberals of his province, and his famous speech at Quebec, in June, 1877, on Political Liberalism, in which he defined in words as moderate as they were fearless the attitude of the party to the Church, had confirmed his outstanding position. On October 8, 1877, the day that Joseph Cauchon left the cabinet to become Lieutenant-governor of Manitoba, Wilfrid Laurier entered it as Minister of Inland Revenue. He had adhered to his statement to Mackenzie that he would not join the cabinet so long as Cauchon remained a member.<sup>1</sup>

The announcement of Mr. Laurier's accession to the cabinet was greeted with enthusiasm by his own party, and, with few exceptions, with unusually considerate expressions of personal respect from his opponents. His acceptance of office made it necessary to present himself for re-election. His majority in Drummond-Arthabaska at the general election had been substantial, his personal popularity had continued to increase, and the honour of being represented by a member of the cabinet might be expected to appeal to the electors. Yet it was realized it would be an uphill fight. The tide was running against the government, and the Opposition were determined at all costs to administer a final blow by the defeat of the newest minister.

Both parties were well organized for the fray. Mr. Laurier was seconded by a brilliant band of speakers,

<sup>1</sup>"We took him pretty soiled; we send him back a little cleaner." Laurier in speech at L'Avenir, "LA MINERVE," Oct. 11, 1877.



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François Langelier, Louis Fréchette, Honoré Mercier, Hector Fabre, Charles Devlin and Ernest Pacaud, while his opponent, M. Bourbeau, himself of little distinction, had the support of the leading Conservative speakers of the province, J. A. Chapleau, L. F. R. Masson, J. J. Curran, and Thomas White, with Israel Tarté directing the campaign. But it was not in the public oratory of the Whites and the Chapleaus that Mr. Laurier's opponents put their main trust. Drummond-Arthabaska was the county which witnessed, a generation later, the famous whispering campaign on the naval issue. In 1877, the same tactics were freely used in the back concessions. The religious attitude of the Liberals was strongly attacked: the Rouges were declared to be under the censure of the Pope, friends of the apostate Chiniquy, allies of the excommunicated Guibord, rebels against the authority of the bishops. It was announced that Mr. Laurier had become "a minister"—a Protestant clergyman. Another ingenious canvasser declared that none of his children had been baptized, which was strictly true, as no children had ever blessed his home. An extraordinary individual named Thibault, a Montreal attorney, with "a baggage of blather, bluff and billingsgate," seems from the epithets hurled at him by the Liberal organ in the county to have been particularly effective. Possessed of a very flexible grandmother, who was born in whatever parish he was visiting—a few weeks later, in a campaign among the Acadians of Nova Scotia, declared to be a daughter of Evangeline—the familiar friend of bishops, whose carriages stood every

day at his door; the instructor of priests, who throughout the world were trained on his treatises; flourishing a telegram of approval which he announced he had just received from the Pope; builder of hospitals, convents, colleges; an orator famed throughout Canada, the United States, the Indies and Senegambia, the mild and modest Thibault proved a thorn in the flesh to the Liberals. Not even Thibault marked the lowest depths. The Liberals charged that money was flowing like water, and though the charges were denied and countered, they were later fully sustained.

One incident in the campaign it always gave Mr. Laurier much pleasure to recall. A good supporter of his listened attentively one Sunday to a sermon in which his curé denounced Liberal Catholics. On the Monday he sought out the curé and asked whether it would be possible for a good Catholic to vote for a Liberal. "No: impossible," was the reply. Next Sunday, the curé, more discreet, exhorted his flock to vote according to their conscience. "But," the query followed, "my conscience tells me to vote for Mr. Laurier; and yet you say if I vote for a Liberal it will be a sin. I think I must not vote at all." The third Sunday brought a sermon denouncing political indifference, and insisting that it was the duty of good citizens to vote and not leave the suffrage to the uninformed and evil-minded. "My curé," responded the puzzled voter next morning, "I cannot vote for Mr. Laurier, for you tell me that if I vote for a Liberal I shall be damned; I cannot vote for Mr. Bourbeau, for you tell me that if I do not follow my

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conscience I shall be damned; I cannot vote for neither, for you tell me that if I do not vote at all I shall be damned. Since I must be damned anyway, I'll be damned for doing what I like. I am going to vote for Mr. Laurier."

The election was held on October 27. The result is thus stated in the next issue of the "Journal d'Arthabaska": "Mr. Laurier is beaten by 29 votes. We have gone through the figures twenty times, before we could credit them. The thing was perfectly impossible; we would not believe it. Yet such is the fact, and it is with a feeling of profound humiliation that we announce it." The defeat was a serious blow to the government and to the new minister, repudiated in his home riding on the threshold of his career. True, next year, when the case came to trial, Mr. Bourbeau admitted that his agents had committed bribery, and the election was annulled; true, in the general election that followed, the Conservatives of Drummond-Arthabaska offered Mr. Laurier an acclamation; but that did not repair the damage done.

It might have been expected that the young minister would be crushed by the blow. To be accorded the rare honour of entry into the federal cabinet in his thirty-sixth year, with scarce six years of parliamentary experience behind him, and then to have the cup dashed from his lips, to be flouted by his own constituents, to be rejected in favour of an obscure and harmless local rival, was a catastrophe which might well have brought disturbance, if not despair, to his mind. Yet he faced the outlook with a smile, without a word of recrimination or

regret. In that hour of defeat he revealed the power that was to be the outstanding mark of his future career. It was a power which had its root in mind and heart, in a philosophic fatalism and in a courage that never feared odds. He had early schooled himself not to expect too much from life, not to be carried away by success or cast down by defeat, to watch the players and the scenes on life's stage with an objective calm and a recognition of the touch of inevitableness in all they said and did. A personal courage which never failed reinforced his philosophy, and the self-control which made his face an imperturbable mask concealed from the world any chagrin or regret. His distant cousin and later fellow-member of parliament, the poet Louis Fréchette, thus in later years recorded the day:

A reverse does not disturb him any more than success exalts him. He receives it with the same smile. His defeat in 1877 was a terrible body blow, an unexpected, it might be a fatal reverse. I was with him that evening, along with other friends. We felt overwhelmed. Yet his good humour never varied by a hair's-breadth from his habitual calm, and his hand did not shake with the slightest quiver as he raised his glass to the toast of better days. I ask myself if, as with the debits and credits of a ledger, good fortune and ill fortune are not entered in due order as a necessary part of the whole account, in the calculations of that soul so profoundly philosophical in temper.<sup>1</sup>

It was impossible to accept the verdict as final. Mr. Laurier had an interview with Mr. Mackenzie in Montreal. Several Liberal members at once offered to

<sup>1</sup> "Les Hommes du Jour; Wilfrid Laurier," p. 14.

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resign in Mr. Laurier's favour. It was determined to accept the offer of Hon. Isidore Thibaudeau, member for Quebec East. The nominations were held on November 7, Mr. Laurier's opponent being a former member, Adolphe Tourangeau. Both sides threw themselves into a contest which has become legendary in the annals of Quebec politics for its fierce rivalry and wild humour. Mr. Laurier fought with a vigour that aroused his party's enthusiasm. The ineffable Thibault took a part in the campaign which was excessive even for his vanity. There are still current in Quebec verses of the songs that were sung to drown poor Thibault's harangue. "The glory of a blagueur of this sort," declared the "Journal d'Arthabaska," "is always ephemeral; the public may be deceived once, but rarely twice. The success of the Conservatives in Arthabaska had gone to the heads of Thibault and his friends. Confident from this success, the clowns have tried to exhibit their bear in the heart of Quebec, but the people have mocked both the bear and the bear-leaders:

Thibault est à l'eau,  
Dondain,  
Thibault est noyé  
Dondé.

Instead of chasing him and beating him as the Conservatives would have done, they contented themselves with greeting him with songs." When the polls closed on November 28, the new minister was found to be elected by a majority of 315. "I have unfurled the Liberal standard above the ancient citadel of Quebec," the vic-

tor announced, "and there I will keep it waving." For over forty years it waved in old Quebec, and the names of Laurier and Quebec East were not divided.

The outburst of joy in ministerial circles was evidence of their tension and their fears. From Quebec to Ottawa the journey was marked by torch-light processions, bonfires, massed bands, and speeches of glowing triumph. In Quebec East itself, in Arthabaska, in Montreal, thousands assembled to greet him. But when Ottawa was reached, Ottawa, not yet blasé and cynical from over-much knowledge of politics behind the scenes, turned out in cheering multitudes with brass bands, hundreds of carriages and six hundred torch-bearers in procession.

One victory could not save a party. The government decided to go to the country in September, 1878. Some members of the cabinet, including Cartwright, thought it would have been better to appeal in June, before the tide reached its height; other Ontario Liberals, like John Charlton, urged postponement to give time for a campaign of education and for something to turn up. Mackenzie was confident. The government had given an honest and efficient administration; the ills from which the country suffered were beyond the power of any government to cure; surely Ontario at least would not return to the arch-corruptionists it had spewed forth four short years before. Laurier was quite of the contrary view. Yet, believing the government doomed, he fought none the less vigorously, speaking for the first time in Ontario as well as in Quebec constituencies.

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The outcome exceeded the worst fear of the government and the highest hopes of the Opposition. The Conservatives swept every province except New Brunswick.<sup>1</sup> From a minority of sixty they had leaped to a majority of sixty-eight. Lavish promises proved more seductive than honest deeds. The Liberals entered on a twenty-year pilgrimage in the deserts of opposition.<sup>1</sup>

### 1 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

	1872		1874		1878	
	Lib- erals	Con- servatives	Lib- erals	Con- servatives	Lib- erals	Con- servatives
Ontario .....	50	38	64	24	29	59
Quebec .....	27	38	33	32	20	45
Nova Scotia .....	10	11	17	4	7	14
New Brunswick .....	9	7	11	5	11	5
Prince Edward Island .....	..	..	6	0	1	5
Manitoba .....	1	3	2	2	1	3
British Columbia .....	0	6	0	6	0	6
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	97	103	133	73	69	137

## CHAPTER V

### UNDER A NEW LEADER

The Retirement of Mackenzie—Blake Becomes Leader—Laurier on his Fellow-Leaders—The Working of Federalism—The Letellier Affair—Macdonald and Mowat—Quebec Provincial Politics—Laurier and The Den of Forty Thieves—Canadian Pacific Contract—Hiving the Grits—The General Election of 1882.

**T**HE overthrow of the Mackenzie government gave new urgency to the question of the leadership of the Liberal party. Mackenzie had committed the crime of being defeated. Many were ready to lay the blame for the party's failure upon his unbending rigidity, his lack of conciliatory manners, his over-caution. As a matter of fact, Mackenzie had been prepared, in 1876, to compromise on the tariff issue to the extent of a slight increase in the general rates, for additional revenue, with any protective effects that might be incidental, but had been prevented by the opposition of the Maritime Liberals. He had been anxious, when he saw the tide going against him, to bring on the elections in June instead of September; Cartwright, Mills, Burpee, Jones, as well as Laurier and Huntington, urged the same course, but some Quebec and Maritime members were not ready and against his better judgment Mackenzie had yielded. Yet when all allowance was made, it was clear that he had not kept in touch with the country, too absorbed in



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the administrative work of the heaviest department to have adequate leisure for party leadership or general guidance of policy. Laurier had come back after his speaking tour in Ontario convinced that the government was going to be defeated, but Mackenzie scouted his forecast and insisted to the last that they would have a sweeping majority.

Blake had taken no part in the election. He had been absent in Europe while Mackenzie was straining every nerve to combat the influences of commercial depression and the lavish promises of protectionist soothsayers. He had stood for Bruce, but had been defeated. For one session he was absent from Ottawa. Then the resignation of the member of the West Durham opened a way, and in October, 1879, he was once more returned to parliament.

During the week after the election Mackenzie had announced to several friends his intention to resign and to let the members choose a leader who might be more successful. But as the year went on and his fighting spirit revived, he had thought better of it, and no resignation was offered. When the second session came, with Blake once again in his seat, there was still no hint of withdrawal. Through the whole session Mackenzie did not once summon a caucus of the party, an omission unprecedented for many years. The death of Holton and Brown during the session robbed him of two of his closest personal and political friends,—Holton dying in March, and Brown, shot by a drunken discharged printer in the same month, lingering on in pain

until May. Still the lonely and austere leader gave no sign.

Discontent mounted, until finally the chairman of the caucus, "Joe" Rymal, called a meeting on his own initiative. A resolution was passed, asking Mackenzie to consider the question of the leadership. Five of his late colleagues, Cartwright, Burpee, Smith, Pelletier, and Laurier, were asked to put the matter before him. Laurier was ill, and not present at the caucus. Smith, Burpee, and Cartwright called at his rooms at the Russell House and asked him to go with them to Mackenzie's office. He could not go that day. Next morning the five went to Mackenzie's room in the Commons. Pelletier did not enter. The others greeted Mackenzie, then stood ill at ease. Burpee mentioned that the party had held a caucus. "Yes, I heard about that," was Mackenzie's gruff response. A pause followed; then Pelletier entered. Mackenzie turned to him: "Pelletier, is not this simply a conspiracy of Mills and Rymal to put Blake in?" "No, Mr. Mackenzie," Pelletier stammered, "we thought that in your state of health—" "There is nothing the matter with my health. It is all a conspiracy of a few men." Then another pause, more lengthy and more painful. At last, seeing the older men mute, Laurier spoke out: "As a sincere friend of yours, Mr. Mackenzie, I must tell you that it is not so: there is a general movement. We have been defeated; you have been defeated; it is only human nature that a defeated army should seek another general. There is not a man who has not high regard for your

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services, but there is a general feeling—” “Very well,” Mackenzie broke in, “if that is so, I shall very soon cease to lead the Liberal party.”

Late that night, just as the House was about to adjourn at two o'clock, Mr. Mackenzie rose: “I desire to say a word or two with regard to my personal relations to the House. I yesterday determined to withdraw from my position as leader of the Opposition, and from this time forth I will speak and act for no person but myself.” That was all. For twelve years more Mackenzie sat on the Liberal benches, slowly worn down by a fatal paralytic malady, taking less and less part in the proceedings of the House, until in his last sessions he appeared a mere ghost of the fighter he once had been. With grim lips he saw his successors come and go; with mellowing comprehension he watched Macdonald manage men; and then, in 1892, a year after his great rival, he passed from the scene.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be of interest here to note Laurier's comments, long years afterward, on his fellow-leaders. These judgments, and those noted in later chapters, were given to the writer, in casual and unpremeditated but never unconsidered conversation. They were coloured by no bias or passion; Laurier's power of objective judgment was as marked as his tolerance, a tolerance which had its roots as much in the cynicism born of a varied experience of men as in his native kindness and sympathy:

“Cartwright was the most finished speaker in the House in my time, and a very effective debater. Mackenzie knocked his opponent down; Cartwright ran his through with keen rapier thrust, and usually turned the sword in the wound. He was a master of classic eloquence, and it was a pleasure, at least on our side, to listen to the fluent, precise, faultless English of his most impromptu utterance. Blake was perhaps a more omnivorous reader, but Cartwright was distinctly the most lettered man in the House. His mordant wit set his opponents writhing, and did not always spare his technical friends. His duels with Tupper, who was a better hand at the bludgeon, were particularly interesting, though the exchange of personalities was more intense than I had been used to in Quebec. He was a good Liberal, at least a good Grit, after he

Edward Blake became the leader of the Liberal party in the Dominion in May, 1880. Wilfred Laurier had been recognized as the leader of the Quebec wing of the party since his entrance into the Mackenzie cabinet in October, 1877. The years that followed, until the general election of 1887, seated the Conservatives firmly in power for the third time in succession, brought to Blake bitter disappointment, loss of hope, and loss of interest, and gave to Laurier the opportunity of developing from a provincial to a national position.

Blake led the Liberal party for seven years and through two general elections. He and his followers were filled with hope and enthusiasm when the pilgrimage began; he was wearied of politics and politicians when it ended. Important issues arose on which he and his party had taken an emphatic stand, but the country was not persuaded that a change of government was

left the Tory fold, but I often felt that he would have been more at home in the old unreformed House of Commons in England, or in the diplomatic service. No man among us paid so much heed to international affairs, and to the international aspect of Canadian questions, and few had as far vision.

"Alexander Mackenzie was straight and solid as his own masonry. He was more characteristically Scotch than his fellow-countryman Sir John, who had a suppleness more Southern. The Scotch Presbyterians who have stood for democracy for generations, and who were the backbone of Upper Canada Liberalism, never had a more upright and more downright representative than Mackenzie, if he did happen to be a Scotch Baptist; the Baptists themselves usually had the root of the matter in them. He was a thorough-going party man. Not that he would for an instant countenance any tricky or underhanded 'practical' politics; he was too unswervingly honest for that, and too deeply convinced that time and the Lord would be on the side of the righteous. But he was certain that the Tories had inherited most of Adam's original sin, and he usually had the facts at his fingers' ends to prove it. We never had a better debater in the House; a grand man on his legs, we used to call him. There was no one who could stand up under his sledge-hammer blows. He knew his facts, he knew his men, he had

needed. The Fates, his own temperament, the adroitness of his opponent, the renewal of dissensions in the Liberal ranks, the influence of protected manufacturers and the loading of the dice in electoral redistribution were to prove too much even for Blake's great powers to overcome.

Throughout these years Laurier was a loyal and effective lieutenant. He did not speak often: his contributions to Hansard do not make one page for twenty of his leader's. Yet he took his part in every first-class issue, shared in the protracted struggles which marked the fourth and fifth parliaments of Canada, and in increasing measure came before the public to defend his party's policy. His share in debate varied with the issue. On such a question as the financial relations of the government with the Canadian Pacific, Laurier had little to say; Blake had made that issue absorbingly his own and in any case, while possessed of no small share

a firm grip on principle and an inexhaustible fund of indignation, a mind that thought straight and could turn quick. He made an excellent administrator of a department. It was his misfortune that he was called to face other tasks for which he was not so well fitted, and that he was contrasted with the more brilliant and unfathomed qualities of Blake. He had not the imagination nor the breadth of view required to lead a party and a country; and he gave to the details of a department the time that should have gone to planning and overseeing the general conduct of the administration. But it would be well if we had more Mackenzies in public life to-day.

"Blake was the most powerful intellectual force in Canadian political history. He had an extraordinary mental organization, a grasp that covered the whole and searched out each smallest detail. He was first and foremost the great advocate, a tremendous dialectician, analyzing and cross analyzing to the last point, major points and minor points, utterly exhaustive. But he was no mere man of words. He would have proved Canada's most constructive statesman had he held office. Why did he never reach the place his genius warranted and all men expected? I do not know whether the reason lay more in the country, in his party,

of business shrewdness, Laurier was never interested and never at home in the intricacies of high finance. On constitutional questions, the powers and privileges of a lieutenant-governor or the encroachment of the federal authority upon local rights, and on political questions, a uniform federal franchise or a gerrymandering of Ontario, Laurier's firm grasp of principles and direct interest in the political fray forced him to the front. But it was only when an issue arose in which principle was touched with passion, an issue that involved the pride and prejudice of race, that went to the heart of the problem of the relation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians—Riel's revolt and its aftermath—that Laurier was fully roused and took a foremost part.

Partly because the constitution of the Dominion was still in the gristle, partly because of the unusually close connection between federal and local politics which marked these years, questions of the scope and limit of federal or provincial powers were in the foreground throughout the period.

or with Blake himself. You must remember that he took hold after a crushing defeat, and held the party leadership seven years. Seven years was not a long time in Canadian party warfare, and most of our opposition Jacobs have had to serve more than seven years in bondage. Patience was needed, but Blake was never patient. He was not the man to fight uphill battles. He was proud, and expected men to come to him; sensitive, for he lacked humour; honourable and earnest, and saw charlatans and men steeped in corruption holding high place in public life. Public life in the eighties was not a calling where thin-skinned men thrive. The kindest of men to his intimates, he wore the sensitive man's mask of indifference to the public. Ill-health and a nervous temperament unfitted him for the drudgery and disappointments of politics. He was moody and nervous when things were not going well. Yet without any of the lesser arts, he cast a spell over every man in parliament. We felt in the presence of genius, and would have been proud to serve to the end, had he not drawn himself aloof.



EDWARD BLAKE  
Leader of the Liberal Party, 1880-87





## UNDER A NEW LEADER

In a federal state it was inevitable that difficulties should arise as to the bounds and shifts of power. There had been few models to guide the fathers of Confederation in their task. In the great republic which was the foremost exemplar of federalism, difficulties had arisen so serious that only the sword could cut the knot. Canada had sought to avoid some of the weaknesses the experience of the United States made clear, but in so doing had sailed into uncharted waters.

Macdonald, it has been observed, was opposed to the union of the provinces upon a federal basis, literally until the hour of the decision which made it feasible. His plan of a single parliament for all Canada would have made Confederation impossible, since there was not a ghost of a likelihood that Quebec or the provinces by the sea would make the sacrifice of local freedom this involved. Time has made it clear that if established, in a country soon to cover half a continent and with the widest diversity of ways, of needs and opportunities, legislative union would have proved stifling and unworkable. Yet his influence and the influence of those who shared his dread of States' rights tendencies resulted in the adoption of many expedients devised to strengthen the hands of the central authorities. The central government was given wide specified powers and made the residuary legatee; it could appoint and dismiss the lieutenant-governors who were the formal heads of the provincial governments, veto the laws of provincial legislatures, appoint the judges

of the higher provincial courts, and with substantial subsidies soothe the provinces into content.

For twenty years after Confederation, and particularly in the second decade, the scope and workability of this constitution were constantly put to the test. In large measures the solution was worked out by fine-spun constitutional arguments and lengthy court decisions, which might be of far-reaching import but did not, as Brown would say, come home to the business and bosoms of men. When, however, the personal aspect was involved, as in the long duel between Mowat and Macdonald, or when party fortunes were at stake, as in Letellier's *Coup d'état*, or when vital economic issues underlay the constitutional wrangles, as in Manitoba's fight against the disallowance of her measures chartering competitors to the Canadian Pacific, then lawyers' tomes provided welcome ammunition to hurl at opponents and constitutional formulas became party war-cries.

There was no uncertainty as to party attitude on the issue. The Conservatives, as champions of authority and incidentally as the party in control of the central government, exalted national unity and federal power. The Liberals, champions of freedom, heirs of the groups which had opposed Confederation, and incidentally as the party in power in the foremost province, stood steadily for provincial rights. Laurier gave this policy whole-hearted support. He had much of the Whig respect for balanced powers. He believed that a wide measure of local autonomy was essential

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in order to develop responsibility, to avert friction and to ensure the confidence and good-will essential for enduring unity. Only by adhering faithfully to the principle and promise of a federal union could Confederation avoid the rock on which Union had foundered.

It was typical of Macdonald that his first scheme for undermining provincial autonomy was through personal control. He succeeded in having installed in Toronto as well as in Quebec a government closely in sympathy with the Ottawa administration. The practice of double mandates greatly facilitated this means of control. Macdonald himself did not hold seats in both the federal and the local house, but he seriously contemplated entering the Ontario house to keep "a check on the powers that be in Toronto." Laurier, in his first session in the Quebec legislature, had summed up pithily the objection from the provincial point of view: "With the single mandate, Quebec is Quebec; with the double mandate, it becomes only an appendix to Ottawa." The practice of double representation was prohibited in 1872, and though close relations continued to exist between federal and provincial party leaders, the loss of this direct means of enforcing uniformity and the inevitability that some at least of the provincial governments would always be of a different political complexion from the federal, forced Macdonald to seek more permanent means of control.

The Letellier case raised the next question, the part the lieutenant-governors of the provinces were to play.

Were they to be agents of Ottawa, responsible to the federal cabinet for their conduct, or constitutional kinglets, sheltered by the assumption of all responsibility by provincial ministers? It was not Ottawa that first forced this issue, but Quebec. Luc Letellier de Saint-Just had given up his post as Minister of Agriculture in the Mackenzie cabinet in 1876 to become Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec. His coming added to the tensivity of a difficult political situation. The De Boucherville ministry, representing the extreme Tory and ultramontane wing of the Bleus, was beset by dissension in the ranks of its own party and by the disintegrating influence of railway lobbyists and speculative rings. Now it was called upon to face for the first time since Confederation a situation under which the formal head of the provincial administration was a man who for many years had been a vigorous and unrelenting foe of all that his ministers stood for. The personal factor accentuated the difficulty. Ever since entering political life in 1850, as a man of thirty, Letellier had been fighting Conservative and clerical influence in eastern Quebec. His electoral struggles, legendary for their bitterness and persistence, had intensified his stubborn convictions, and made it difficult for him to act King Log. A man of imposing figure and address, proud, insistent on the dignity of his position, rather indolent between outbursts of political campaigning or deer-hunting, Letellier would not be easily managed. Nor were his ministers the men to manage him. Charles Boucher de Boucherville, the premier, was a man of

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unquestioned probity and honour, but at the opposite pole of political opinion, and of a dignity more at ease, as resting on the consciousness of many generations of seigniorial eminence, though no less insistent. His attorney-general, A. R. Angers, the real power in the cabinet, had made his way rapidly by energy and ability, but his domineering temper had not made him popular.

Beginning with doubtless sincere expressions of desire to work in harmony, Letellier and his ministers were soon at outs. No one outstanding issue developed. Petty slights and misunderstandings—now Angers furious because of being given too low a place at a state dinner, now Letellier piqued because formal proclamations had been issued without his signature being authorized—prepared the way for deadlock over the cabinet's plans for building the North Shore Railway between Quebec and Montreal. The growing extravagance of administration, the wide-spread public suspicion of intrigue and corruption on the part of some of the government's supporters in connection with the railway, and the Quebeckers' traditional hostility to the direct taxation to which low finances had forced the administration, were stirring public opinion and providing an atmosphere in which the lieutenant-governor's hostility throve apace. On March 2, 1878, after some brief interchanges, Letellier informed the premier, in terms which amounted to a dismissal, that he would not sanction the North Shore Bill. De Boucherville at once resigned. Letellier sent for Joly, as leader of the

Opposition, to form a new government, and granted a dissolution. The elections were bitter. The Conservatives denounced Letellier's tyranny and proclaimed themselves champions of responsible government; the Liberals attacked the railway rings and Angers *le taxeur*, and assumed responsibility for Letellier's noble action. When they went to the country, the Liberals had barely half as many members as their opponents: the elections raised them to equality. With difficulty and many shifts, Joly weathered the first weeks of the session on a precarious majority of one, which was, however, increased steadily but slowly in by-elections.

Then the contest shifted to Ottawa. In the spring session of 1878 Macdonald moved a vote of censure on Letellier. The Liberals, though unaware in advance of Letellier's intention to dismiss his ministers, and convinced that he erred in not letting events take their course and giving the De Boucherville cabinet enough rope to hang itself, opposed and defeated the vote of censure, insisting that the matter was one for the people of Quebec to determine at the pending provincial election. Next session saw the Conservatives in power at Ottawa and Joly in power, or at least in office, at Quebec. Macdonald hesitated to take further action in face of the endorsement of Joly by the people, but the Quebec Bleus demanded their pound of flesh. Mousseau moved Macdonald's resolution of the previous session. Mackenzie opposed any attempt to go behind the Quebec electors and insisted that if action were

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taken, it should be on the initiative of the governor-general's responsible advisers.

Laurier had made a cautious defence of Letellier's coup in the previous session. Now he took the lead in opposing Mousseau's motion. He declared that in refusing to pass the same resolution a year before, the majority had not expressed any opinion upon Letellier's course, but had merely affirmed it was a matter for the people of the province. Now the people had spoken, and had upheld his action. ("No, no.") "What are you here for if you say no? If your course had been supported by the people, you would not seek at the hands of this House the vengeance which you are now seeking." Why seek to override the judgment of the province concerned, by the votes of members from other provinces in whose campaign Letellier had never been an issue? Letellier had committed no crime; he had exercised a right which he had the abstract power to exercise: "It is said that the exercise of it was unwise, but in the estimation of the people of Quebec, that unwise act saved the country." Letellier's act had since been covered by ministerial responsibility. The Dominion should not interfere. Granted that the House had a right to interfere in provincial matters in some cases, where could the line be drawn? The same rule should be applied to administrative as to legislative acts.

The doctrine is now settled that the power of disallowing provincial laws is to be confined to those cases only where provincial legislatures may have stepped beyond their jurisdiction

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into prohibited ground; that this power is to be exercised only for the protection of imperial or federal rights which may have been invaded by provincial legislatures, but never to afford relief to any section of the community which may deem itself aggrieved by that legislation. Interference in such cases would be a violation of the federal principle, and in all such cases the aggrieved portion of the community must seek and can find its relief in the application of the principle of responsible government.

For the members from the province of Quebec, he concluded, to urge federal intervention was to put in jeopardy the independence of their province merely to snatch a party triumph.

The Bleus had their motion of censure, passed on a straight party vote, by 136 to 51. Next they demanded Letellier's head. The governor-general, the Marquis of Lorne, had a fellow-feeling for lieutenant-governors, and was extremely reluctant to sanction Letellier's dismissal after Joly had assumed responsibility and been sustained by the people. Macdonald himself had little enthusiasm for the task, but the Bleus would brook no delay. Macdonald offered his half-hearted recommendation of dismissal; the marquis demurred, and believed that he should seek instructions from the British government before establishing an important precedent. The government was in a quandary; should they yield, or should they resign? Macdonald decided to yield, but with ill-grace; his statement to the Commons gave the impression that the governor-general's action had not the assent of the cabinet. The Bleus were furious, hooted their leader in the House, stormed in caucus, threatened a vote of non-confidence, but fell



into line. The British authorities advised the governor-general to follow the recommendations of his cabinet on this as on other matters. Letellier's dismissal followed, and De Boucherville was avenged.

In the attempt to hold a lieutenant-governor personally responsible to the federal government rather than allow him shelter behind the responsibility of the provincial ministry, Macdonald had acted with some reluctance. Into the conflicts with Ontario which followed he threw himself with a vigour and tenacity rooted in strong personal feeling. In great measure the conflicts as to constitutional rights were merely the cover for personal rivalry and party jockeying. In Ottawa John A. Macdonald was now supreme; in Toronto, Oliver Mowat. They had been friends in youth, Mowat studying law in Macdonald's Kingston office, but in the intensely personal atmosphere of Union politics they had become bitter enemies. We have a glimpse of their relations, and incidentally of the amenities of parliamentary life in the sixties, in a scene in the House in April, 1861,—Macdonald accusing Mowat of inconsistency, Mowat declaring the attack false and unwarranted, and Macdonald crossing the floor of the House, shaking his fist in Mowat's face, and shouting, "You damned pup, I'll slap your chops for you." When Mowat retired to the bench, hostilities slumbered, but when he stepped down to take control of the provincial administration in 1872, and particularly when in face of Conservative victory on federal issues, he strengthened his grip on Ontario, the rivalry became

acute. It was a well-matched struggle. Macdonald had nearly forty years of parliamentary experience behind him, a mastery of every trick of the trade, a shrewd knowledge of men, and a hold on the public imagination that no other man could hope to equal. Mowat was fully as shrewd, a sounder lawyer, and with a firmer grip on himself; his deep and genuine piety—even on a trip to Paris and Italy he is found hunting out three Presbyterian or at least evangelical services a Sunday in byways and over grocery shops—won him support in many quarters, and the rooted confidence that his piety would not hamper his political tactics in an emergency prevented it proving a handicap in other quarters. A Liberal by conviction and a Tory by temperament, he was well equipped to give his province honest and cautiously progressive government.

Macdonald's first line of attack was to seek to limit the physical bounds of Mowat's domain. The western and northern boundaries of Ontario had never been definitely drawn. Before Confederation, the province of Canada, heir to New France, had claimed all the Western lands that the daring of French explorers and fur-traders had staked out: it was to be one of the ironies of history that in the very lands that came to Ontario on the strength of these French-Canadian exploits, later generations of politicians were to seek to limit the French tongue by making assent to restrictive school regulations a condition of the grant of northern Ontario homesteads. After Confederation, the Domin-

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ion, as successor to the Hudson's Bay Company, claimed for itself every acre southward and eastward that the company had ever asserted lordship over. The issue hung on the interpretation of a medley of treaties, statutes, executive acts. In Mackenzie's time the Dominion and Ontario agreed to submit the issue to arbitration; but when the arbitrators decided in favour of the province, Macdonald, again in office, refused to accept the award. He adroitly involved Manitoba in the dispute by having an act passed granting it the greater part of the territory in dispute, and encouraged demands from Quebec that the balance of provincial power should not be disturbed by a huge addition to Ontario's domains.

In the session of 1882 the dispute came before the House of Commons. There was much parade of technical interpretation, and Laurier in rising, after listening to many disquisitions on the difference between "north" and "northward," quoted the appeal of the Marquis of Torcy to Bolingbroke during the negotiation of the Treaty of Utrecht: "In the name of God, sir, order your plenipotentiaries to be less excellent grammarians." He urged that the acceptance of the award was an obligation of honour, and that it was a judicial finding and not a compromise. Then, turning to the Quebec Conservatives who were opposing the award, he declared:

In speaking thus I know perfectly well that I shall be violently attacked in my own province by the members of the Conservative party. ["Hear, hear!"]. I see that I have not

mistaken the prejudices of my honourable friends opposite. I know their prejudices too well not to know in advance what their argument will be: I know that it will be an appeal to the baser prejudices of my fellow-countrymen. But, sir, I have too much respect for the sense of justice of my countrymen to fear the effect of those appeals. . . . I have no hesitation in saying this award is binding on both parties and should be carried out in good faith. The consideration that the great province of Ontario may be made greater I altogether lay aside as unfair, unfriendly, and unjust, I do not grudge to Ontario the extent of territory declared hers under this award. The eternal principles of justice are far more important than thousands of millions of acres of land. Let us adhere to those principles of justice, and in so doing we will have the surest foundation for securing justice on every occasion.

The boundary dispute and its sequels dragged through another parliament, but meanwhile other phases of the same broad issue had developed. Throughout the eighties a series of legal battles was fought between the Dominion and the Ontario governments to determine the limits of the legislative powers assigned each authority by the British North America Act. One case<sup>1</sup> had arisen under the Mackenzie régime, and Mowat had made good his contention that the government of the province and not of the Dominion represented the Crown in taking possession of escheated estates. More important in its practical bearings was the confirmation of the power of the province to impose conditions for carrying on business upon companies whether incorporated by the Dominion, by a foreign or British government, or by the province itself.<sup>2</sup> But it was

<sup>1</sup> In re Mercer.

<sup>2</sup> Citizens' Insurance Company vs. Parsons.

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only when the question of the control of the liquor traffic was touched that popular and party interest was aroused. In 1876 the Ontario legislature had adopted the Crooks Act, stiffening the conditions under which licenses for the retailing of liquors could be granted, and giving the licensing power to boards of commissioners appointed by the provincial government for each municipality. Liberals praised the Crooks Act as a progressive measure of temperance reform; Conservatives damned it as an attempt to build up a political machine through the patronage and the power conferred upon the government. Macdonald decided to intervene. In the federal campaign of 1882 he declared that if he carried the country, as he would do, he would "tell Mr. Mowat, that little tyrant" who had "attempted to control public opinion by getting hold of every office from that of a Division Court bailiff to a tavern-keeper," that he would get a bill passed at Ottawa returning to the municipalities the power taken from them by the License Act.

Macdonald had still another shot in his locker,—the federal power of disallowing provincial statutes. The British North America Act had given the governor-general the same power of disallowing provincial statutes which the Queen enjoyed of disallowing federal statutes. Macdonald had early realized that if the governor-general's advisers should be "States' rights men, who would look more to sectional than to general interests," this power might be little used, and accordingly in January, 1869, he had suggested to the

governor-general, Lord Monck, the advisability of seeking instructions from the Colonial Office empowering him to act in case of disallowance or reservation, independently or under British instructions.<sup>1</sup> The correspondence between Monck and Grenville which followed led to the issuing of instructions to refer such measures to England for advice. When Blake became Minister of Justice, he made short work of this arrangement, insisting and in the end securing that in this as other connections, the "governor-general" could only mean the governor-general in council, acting on the advice of his ministers. It still remained to determine how the federal ministers would exercise their powers. It was at first assumed that the veto power would be used only in case a provincial act infringed federal or imperial interests or was plainly unconstitutional. But in 1881 Macdonald extended its scope. The Ontario legislature had intervened in a lumbermen's dispute by passing an act giving the holders of limits up-stream the right to use slides constructed in a non-navigable stream by a limit-holder lower down, on payment of certain tolls. The up-stream lumberman, Caldwell, happened to be a Liberal; the down-stream man, McLaren, a Conservative. On the ground that the provincial measure involved taking property without adequate compensation, the Dominion government promptly disallowed it. Mowat had it passed again, and once more Macdonald had it disallowed. The Liberal Opposition at Ottawa raised a

<sup>1</sup> Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald." II. 297.

debate on the question, vigorously supporting Mowat's stand, and here for the time the matter rested.

As has already been noted, the prominence of the constitutional issue was due in no small measure to the close connection between provincial and federal politics and politicians. The Dominion was not yet a distinct entity; it was merely a loose grouping of provinces. Canadians, when they did not call themselves Englishmen or Irishmen or Scotchmen or Frenchmen, were apt to think as Quebeckers or Nova Scotians or Ontario men. It was in the provincial arena that all the leading federal politicians had first to prove their mettle. While the double mandate had been abolished, the personal ties between the leaders at Ottawa and the leaders at Toronto or Quebec, surviving from pre-Confederation days, were still strong. This provincial trend was strengthened by the dominance at Ottawa of the two central provinces; the Maritime provinces seemed to be isolated and apart, and the Western lands had not yet come to a power which would compel a widening of Ottawa horizons.

The relations between Blake and Mowat were close and friendly, but Ontario political affairs were becoming too stabilized to offer much room for aid or intervention. In 1875 and again in 1879 Mowat had been confirmed in the seat to which Blake and Brown had called him in 1872. The new leader of the Opposition William Ralph Meredith, had put himself in a difficult position by trying to defend the anti-provincial policy

of his fellow-Conservatives at Ottawa. With this issue, with economical and progressive administration, and with the possibilities of patronage well employed, Mowat had little difficulty in holding his own, without more than the normal assistance from his party friends in the House of Commons.

In Quebec, matters were far otherwise. The two parties were divided; the question of leadership was unsettled; cabinets came and went with rapidity. In the fifteen years that followed 1872 Ontario had one premier, Quebec eight. In 1879, on the defeat of the Joly government, J. A. Chapleau, perhaps Quebec's most moving orator, had formed a Bleu ministry. After three years of easy-going administration, Chapleau endeavoured to replenish the empty treasury by the sale of the North Shore Railway, the western section to the Canadian Pacific and the eastern to a Sénécal-McGreevy syndicate. The sale was fought hard, not only by the Liberals but by the rigid ultramontane section of his own party, under De Boucherville and Beaubien. To bring peace, Chapleau resigned, exchanging posts with J. A. Mousseau, secretary of state in the federal government, but Mousseau was little more successful than Chapleau in conciliating the De Boucherville or "Castor" wing. Nor were the Liberals sufficiently united to take full advantage of these dissensions. While Joly continued as leader, the most aggressive force in the party was a young ex-Conservative lawyer, Honoré Mercier, an astute tactician, a hard fighter, and a speaker of torrential powers. Mercier coquetted with





Sir Antoine Aimé Dorion



Sir Hector Langevin



Sir J. A. Chapleau



Honoré Mercier

FOUR QUEBEC LEADERS



Chapleau and Mousseau, who were prepared to consider a coalition with moderate opponents to save themselves from their Castor friends. Joly strongly opposed coalition and the new Liberal organ in Montreal, "La Patrie," under the editorship of M. Beaugrand, attacked Mercier as being willing to sell the party's interests for private gain. At the opening of the 1883 session, Joly resigned and Mercier was elected in his stead, but with the distinct understanding there should be no coalition.

In these provincial controversies, Laurier leaned to Joly and the old Rouge traditions. He was on friendly but hardly on intimate terms with Mercier, and, though sympathetic with Chapleau, disliked the men Chapleau had about him. In 1882 he became involved in a lively controversy. He had been, along with Honoré Mercier and C. A. Langelier, an active collaborator in a new Liberal journal, "L'Electeur," founded in Quebec city in July, 1880, under the editorship, first, of François Langelier, and later of Ernest Pacaud. The group in control were young and aggressive, full of the joy of combat, but they were also shrewd; within seven years "L'Electeur" had undergone fifty libel suits and had never once been condemned. Now an editorial contributed by Mr. Laurier gave rise to one of the most sensational libel suits in the annals of Quebec. The editorial, entitled "The Den of the Forty Thieves,"<sup>1</sup> made a

<sup>1</sup> The Den of the Forty Thieves: "L'Electeur," April 20, 1881.

"This den of the Forty Thieves, which it was thought existed only in the land of legend, is really in existence here among us. It is not, as might be believed, in the heart of a forest, protected by inaccessible

scathing indictment of L. A. Sénécal, a contractor and boss, high in Bleu circles,—Chapleau, Sénécal, and a Montreal journalist, Dansereau, forming what was familiarly known as the Holy Trinity. When suit was brought Mr. Laurier avowed authorship and was promptly put on trial. His counsel pleaded justification; the jury disagreed, with ten for acquittal and two for conviction, but the ventilation of Bleu secrets had been thorough.

In the federal arena the tariff continued an important issue. The government lost no time in carrying out the mandate given it in the elections of 1878. "Tell us what you want," Macdonald told the manufacturers, "and we will give you what you need." For textiles, furniture, boots and shoes, sugar, foodstuffs, and iron and steel products from pig-iron to farm implements,

rocks, guarded by armed sentinels. The robbers who seek refuge in it are not obscure bandits, hidden by day, prowling by night. On the contrary, they flaunt their shamelessness in the full light of day; they strut through the streets, they drink at the public bars, the smoke of their cigars is found on every hand. Moreover, these robbers are not any Tom, Dick, and Harry; robbers though they are, they have been entrusted with a glorious task, the task of restoring the finances of the province of Quebec. This den of robbers is the Administration of the Northern Railway, and the name of the chief of the band is Louis Adelard Sénécal. . . .

"The administration of the Northern Railway to-day is robbery erected into a system. Let no one protest; the word we use does not indicate any violence of language or any irritation of temper. We are merely calling things by their name. When the public contracts on the railway are awarded without competition and in return for a money consideration; when in every undertaking carried on a percentage is levied by the management; when the supplies used on the road are paid for at exorbitant prices, and the ordinary commercial profits are shared, in more or less equal parts between the buyer and seller; when every friend of the government travels free on the road; if this is not robbery erected into a system, what then is it? We speak with knowledge. We know that with the very money drawn from the Northern Railway, M. Sénécal has subsidized lavishly certain newspapers. . . ."

wants and needs were held to be not far apart. The budgets of 1879 and succeeding years brought marked tariff increase, accompanied by a general substitution of specific or compound for *ad-valorem* rates. At the same time the long depression which had shadowed the whole continent came to an end. Trade revived in the United States, giving a fillip to industry in its Northern neighbour. The building of the Canadian Pacific and other roads created a lively demand for men and goods and credit. Soon Canada had passed from soup-kitchens and bankruptcies to rising factory chimneys and feverish speculation. Naturally, the general public gave credit for the improvement in industrial health to the widely advertised patent medicine which had just been taken. They were prepared to give the N. P. a glowing testimonial.

Even had the chances of the attack on the N. P. seemed fair, Blake would have been reluctant to make the tariff the foremost issue. He had no small sympathy with protection on its national side, and was prepared to give it a fair trial, while criticizing its chief excrescences. With this attitude Laurier agreed. He had shared in the desire of the Parti National to give infant industries a chance, and at this period he differed from the out-and-out protectionists more in questions of degree and application than in questions of principle. The party policy was defined most fully during the session of 1882. The Opposition assault was directed almost wholly against specific tariff schedules. Laurier moved the abolition of the duty designed to force the use

of Nova Scotia coal in Ontario and the duty designed to force the use of Ontario wheat and flour in Nova Scotia. Paterson of Brant attacked the sugar monopoly. Anglin criticized the duties on cottons and woollens as discriminating against the poor. Burpee of St. John showed that the duties on pig- and bar- and sheet-iron were hampering the manufacturers to whom these wares were raw materials. One and all, these proposals were voted down, but the Opposition had prepared its fighting ground for the coming election.

But it was neither fiscal nor constitutional questions which bulked largest in the work of the fourth parliament. Could Canada be made one by building a tariff wall around it? Could Canada be made one by exalting the powers of the central government? There was yet another question to solve: could Canada be made one by building a railway from coast to coast?

The outstanding federal issue in the early eighties, the issue which Blake made most distinctively and most vigorously his own, was the construction and financing of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The weaknesses of the government's bargain provided the main staple of Liberal attack; the eventual success of the project, the government's overwhelming retort. This dominance of a transportation question in the country's politics was neither unprecedented nor surprising. "Consult the annals of Canada for the past fifty years at random, and whatever party may be in power, what do you find?" asked a brilliant Canadian whose premature death was a calamity to his country. "The government

is building a railway, buying a railway, selling a railway, or blocking a railway.”<sup>1</sup>

Railways have counted greatly in the making of Canada and in the party struggles which have reflected the clashing interests at stake. In every new country the railway is indispensable in opening lands to settlement and markets to settlers, and nowhere more than in Canada, with its vast distances, and the seal set by winter on its waterways. But in Canada it has been not merely tonnage and homestead entries that have been at stake, but the very nation's existence. The Dominion was not a natural unity: for thousands of miles but a fringe of settlement a hundred or fewer miles deep along the American border, cut in four by the jutting northward of Maine, the thrust of the Laurentian plateau southward to the Great Lakes and the barriers of the Selkirks and the Rockies, it could never have been made one or kept one unless by the railway. So it was that when in the fifties the Grand Trunk bound the two Canadas, for all their incompatibility of temperament, together beyond possibility of divorce; and when in the seventies the Intercolonial united East and Centre, and justified its builders by making ends meet politically if it could not make ends meet financially, and when in the eighties the Canadian Pacific bound East and West and gave reality to the map's pictured unity, the making of railways not only made and unmade governments in the Dominion, but had a share in the

<sup>1</sup> Paul Lamarche: "Conférence à la Bibliothèque Saint Sulpice." Montreal, 1917.

making of a people,—and in more than one way their unmaking.

A way from the Atlantic to the Pacific and beyond had been the dream of many a daring explorer and fur-trader in Canada's beginnings. The search for the North-West Passage had lured brave English seamen to shipwreck and death on the islands of the North. It was in the search for "La Chine" that La Salle traced the Mississippi to the sea. La Verendrye pushed westward almost within sight of the Rockies, and Mackenzie to the shores of the Pacific, but the paths they blazed took months to follow, in canoe and on foot, with packhorse and Red River cart. The coming of the railway gave a new turn to men's visions, and the pamphleteer and the promoter built many a trans-continental road on paper. It was not until the prospect of bringing all British North America within the Canadian federation emphasized the need, and the achievement of the United States in building the Union Pacific in the sixties pointed the way, that the question entered practical politics.

Within six years after Confederation the Dominion had staked out the lands from sea to sea for its own and multiplied its original area tenfold. First the central territories had been acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company, and then in 1871 the Pacific coast colony entered the union. Canadian statesmen were eager to have an outlet to the Western ocean, and apprehensive of a movement which found backing both inside and outside British Columbia to bring the whole coast from



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Alaska to California under the Stars and Stripes. The ten thousand white settlers in the new province therefore set their terms high, urging first and foremost the immediate building of a transcontinental railway. It was an audacious demand. The engineering difficulties were great; for hundreds of miles the road would have to run through territory where no white man had ever passed. Canada had not yet four million people; the United States had not built across the continent until it had over thirty million. Yet Macdonald accepted the terms, agreeing to begin in two years and complete in ten a road connecting the Pacific Ocean with the railway systems of Ontario and Quebec. He felt strongly the national issues at stake and the confidence that "something would turn up" which gave him his sobriquet of "Old To-morrow" enabled him to discount the difficulties ahead.

The Pacific railway question entered federal politics in 1871 and never left it for a score of years. The Opposition attacked the undertaking to complete a transcontinental road in ten years as extravagant and impossible; the government defended it with mental reservations. The selection of a route roused local rivalries which found political expression. The eagerness of railway promoters to secure the fortunes which American experience had shown could be reaped from extravagant land subsidies and dummy construction companies led to the most audacious campaign of electoral and legislative corruption in Canada's annals up to that time: the revelation in 1872 of the extent to

which Macdonald, Cartier, and Langevin had drawn upon the leader of the chief Pacific syndicate, Sir Hugh Allan, for campaign funds, drove the government out and brought Mackenzie in. In the lean years of world-wide depression that followed, Mackenzie's cautious policy of piecemeal construction as finance and settlement warranted brought British Columbia to the verge of secession. On his return to power in 1878, Macdonald continued the policy of government construction with the same reluctance and the same leisureliness which had marked Mackenzie's régime, until in 1880 the revival of prosperity and speculation reawakened private interest and the opportune appearance of a new syndicate made possible a change of policy.

A group of Canadian and ex-Canadian business men—James J. Hill, Norman Kittson, Donald A. Smith, George Stephen, and R. B. Angus—had found in the lavish land grants and the discouragement of the Dutch bondholders of a thrice-looted Minnesota railway, an opportunity for a daring stroke. They had secured the road for a tithe of its value, and from the outset had reaped immense returns. Their road, the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba, ran to the Manitoba boundary, where it connected with a Pacific branch built by the Mackenzie government from Winnipeg south. Its owners were therefore in a strategic position to undertake construction in Canada. They were flushed with success, and possessed of wealth or prospects of wealth beyond Canadian compare. Naturally their thoughts turned to the possibilities of the newer

North-West. The Canadian government, eager to abandon state construction, met them half-way. "Catch them while their pockets are full," was the advice given Macdonald by his shrewd Eastern Townships lieutenant, John Henry Pope. Negotiations were begun in Ottawa in the spring of 1880 and continued in London during the summer. The attempt to enlist British and Continental capital in the scheme met little success, though the inclusion of a few London, Paris, and Berlin names enabled Sir John on his return to Canada to announce that he had "made a good arrangement with a number of capitalists, not alone in England, but in Germany, France, the United States, and Canada . . . a combination of forces which will not only be sufficient to build the road, but will have additional influence to turn the great current of German emigration from the States to Canada" (cheers). As a matter of fact, the burden of the construction of the road was to fall almost wholly on the Canadian investor and the Canadian taxpayer.

In October, 1880, a formal agreement was reached between the government and a syndicate consisting of George Stephen, Duncan McIntyre, John S. Kennedy, Richard B. Angus, James J. Hill, Morton Rose and Company, and Kohn, Reinach and Company. In December the contract was submitted to parliament and its terms given to the public. In return for the building and operating of a road running through Canadian territory from Lake Nipissing to the Pacific, involving some nineteen hundred miles of new construction,

the syndicate was to receive a subsidy of \$25,000,000 in cash, 25,000,000 acres of selected lands in the fertile belt, mainly in alternate sections within twenty-four miles of the railway, and the seven hundred miles of road then under construction by the government. They were promised exemption from import duties on construction materials, from taxes on land for twenty years after the patents were issued, and on stock and other property forever, and from regulation of rates until ten per cent. was earned on the capital. They were guaranteed also against competition from United States roads in the West; for twenty years the Dominion was to charter "no line of railway south of the Canadian Pacific, except such lines as shall run southwest or to the westward of southwest, or to be within fifteen miles of latitude 49°." The road was to be completed by 1891.

No sooner were the terms of the contract announced than Blake and the Opposition launched an attack upon it in full force. That opportunity should have been given for competitive offers from other sources under the new conditions; that the government was virtually building the road and then presenting it free to the syndicate; that the financial expenditure involved would ruin the country; that there was no certainty that the syndicate could or would supply the capital required for immediate expenditure and ultimate operation; that the blanket choice of land and the exemption from taxation and particularly the monopoly of construction for twenty years would hamper and discourage settlement,

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were the main counts in their indictment. A vigorous press and platform campaign was carried on during the Christmas recess. A rival company was organized by prominent capitalists of Liberal leanings, including Sir William Howland, William Hendrie, A. R. McMaster, A. T. Wood, Allan Gilmour, George A. Cox, P. Larkin, James McLaren, John Walker, John Carruthers, and Alexander Gibson. It submitted an offer to build the road for a smaller subsidy, to waive the exemption and monopoly clauses, and to give the government the "privilege" of postponing the Lake Superior and mountain sections. When parliament met in January, Blake moved a six-page omnibus amendment and exposed every weakness of the contract to galling and overwhelming fire, while his followers in turn offered some twenty-four specific amendments as his share in the comprehensive campaign of his leader.

In a speech made in the House in December, 1880, Mr. Laurier attacked the extravagant terms of the syndicate bargain as the inevitable outcome of the government's rash policy in promising the immediate completion of the road. If the road were built gradually, as the real necessities of the country required, there would be no need to alienate to the syndicate vast areas of land which would better be reserved for homestead grants: "Perhaps if that system were followed there might in a few years be fewer millionaires in this country, but there would be a much greater number of happy and contented homes." The company would be the landlord of the North-West, a monopoly with power

to dominate the settlers either through its ownership of land or its control of the rates on their products. The company's exemption from taxation would retard competition and cripple the development of local governments. While "a Canadian Pacific railway must be built on Canadian soil," the construction of the link north of Lake Superior might well be postponed for some years. It was a delusion to imagine that a contract such as this would end the government's obligations; it merely added new inconveniences and new dangers.

Neither in the country nor in the House did the efforts of the Opposition avail. The government had definitely committed itself before parliament met, and its large majority backed it without flinching. The public was more impressed than deterred by the sums involved. There was general distrust of state construction. Before the organization of the syndicate no alternative and feasible method had been suggested. Stephen and his associates were men of standing and tried capacity. The money-bags of London, Paris, Berlin, and New York were thought to be open to them. The benefits to the country from an energetic policy of construction were immediate; the ills the Opposition stressed were of to-morrow. The people welcomed a policy which was courageous and spectacular. For all the desire for economy in the abstract, a proposal to spend tens of millions of the country's and other peoples' money on railway projects and to create a wide demand for goods and labour of every kind proved immensely popular; henceforth that lesson was

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to be so clear that every politician who ran could read it.

The government's new policy had many strong features which the passing of time has only emphasized. Both parties and the country as a whole favoured private construction and operation. No government department of that day or this could have shown the energy and fertility of resource, made the necessary extensions and connections not only in eastern Canada but in the United States, undertaken the many subsidiary enterprises and assumed the initiative in seeking and building traffic which marked the operations of the Canadian Pacific. Probably the government was right, again, in deciding to give the contract to the Stephen rather than to the Howland syndicate. The offer of the latter group was far from being the sham the government forces charged, and its members were hard-headed and energetic men who had made a success of large enterprises. Yet they were not first in the field, and it is difficult to imagine that they would have shown more courage or persistence or carried out their obligations more honourably than the men to whom the task was given. The public aid granted was large, but large aid was needed to induce investors to face the risks not only of building through unknown wildernesses but of operating a road for which little assured traffic was in sight. The country assumed a heavy burden, but the national issues at stake, the necessity of unifying the far-flung Dominion, justified no small sacrifices.

Yet time has also brought out more clearly the weaknesses charged against the contract. The exemp-

tion from taxation threw undue burdens on straggling settlers, and the monopoly clause, inserted to attract English investors, who, in Van Horne's phrase, hated a monopoly at home as they hated the devil but looked with favour, born of experience of the working of competitive railways, on monopoly abroad, did not attract capital and did deter and hamper settlers. The land bonus failed to produce capital when capital was needed most, though it doubtless facilitated the raising of funds in later days. The private capital put into the road was not adequate, and in consequence the company was compelled to go to the government for aid again and again.

Unfortunately but inevitably the Canadian Pacific project became a party question. It is the function of an Opposition to oppose, a course which often leads to factious quibbling but usually ensures responsible and guarded action. Smarting under electoral defeat, mindful of the earlier overthrow of the government on a railway issue, honestly convinced of the danger and extravagance of the new proposals, the Liberals launched a strong attack on the whole policy. Not content with assailing the weak points of the contract, they were led into taking a position of hostility to the whole project. The complicated financial questions involved gave Blake's critical powers a congenial task. The government forces, convinced of the essential soundness of the policy, with equal lack of discrimination felt called upon to defend every line and comma of the bargain. The action of the Canadian Pacific in



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entering territory in eastern Canada which the Grand Trunk had long considered its private preserve, and the bitter quarrels that followed between the two roads, would in any event have been reflected in politics. The result was that for three general elections railway issues were always prominent and more than once decisive.

Once the contract was ratified by parliament, no time was lost in grappling with the task ahead. A remarkable organization was built up. George Stephen, with his indomitable persistence and unfailing faith; R. B. Angus with his financial experience and shrewd judgment; James J. Hill, until in 1882 divergence of interests between the St. Paul and the new road led him to retire, and William C. Van Horne, whose tireless driving force and freshness of resource marked him as one of the great railway men and one of the outstanding personalities of his time, were chiefly responsible for the efficiency and the success which the road achieved. Donald A. Smith's name had not appeared in the directorate until 1882; it had been only two years before the formation of the syndicate that Macdonald, who never forgave Smith for casting what proved to be the deciding vote in turning him out of office on the Pacific scandal, and Tupper, who vigorously backed his chief, had exchanged with Smith hot and bitter words, in a fugue of "coward," "liar," "traitor," which fills six staccato pages of Hansard, ending with Macdonald's shout, "That fellow Smith is the biggest liar I ever met"; a little time was necessary to permit the wrath of the two Highlanders to cool to the point where they

could see how their interests ran. After 1882 Smith, though a member of the executive, took little part in the management; it was not until the road was a success and an imperial asset which might serve as a basis for an imperial title that he took any interest in it, half persuaded by the chance that he drove the last spike, into believing, as the public believed, that he had driven most of the earlier spikes.

For the first three years the company concentrated on the plain and prairie sections, while the government completed the unfinished portions of the seven hundred miles it had under way, including the line from Fort William, on Lake Superior, to Winnipeg, and the Pacific coast section from Port Moody eastward to Kamloops. After Van Horne took hold, remarkable progress was made in construction. A time schedule was prepared and rigidly observed; track-layers and bridge-gangs followed hard on the grader's heels; week after week two and even three miles of track were laid every day. By December, 1882, the end of steel was 965 miles from Winnipeg and only four miles short of the summit of the Rockies.

The building of the prairie section was accompanied by the usual wave of speculation and seeming prosperity. The railway itself called for men, tools, supplies, in endless procession. Into the West tens of thousands of settlers and speculators poured, first by St. Paul and later through Fort William, staking out homesteads, filing pre-emption sections or buying Winnipeg

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or Brandon town lots to unload on the tenderfoot following. In Ontario, those who did not go west bought town lots or sold farm machinery or organized colonization companies to buy and people the land the government offered for a dollar an acre. In 1882 sixty thousand settlers swarmed into Manitoba, and nearly three million acres were entered by homesteading, pre-emption, or sale.

It was in this atmosphere that the general election of 1882 was fought. It was a C. P. R. election, as 1878 had been a N. P. election. The Liberal leaders found it difficult to get a hearing. It was useless to question the financial strength of a company which was setting new world records for rapidity of construction. It was wasted breath to attack the government's lavish terms before men who were pocketing real or paper profits from the activities those grants had caused or primed. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company itself was not, so far as was known, a participant in the campaign, but its seemingly assured success was an overwhelming argument in support of the administration. The Liberals had attacked both the N. P. and the C. P. R., and at this stage the success of both appeared to vindicate Macdonald's policy.

Before appealing to the country, the government made assurance doubly sure by a measure which the Liberals denounced as a colossal gerrymander. The decennial census of 1881 had shown numerous shifts in the balance of population and rendered necessary a re-

distribution of seats in the federal parliament. The opportunity was improved to the full in the Redistribution Bill. The bill dealt almost exclusively with Ontario and Manitoba, the only provinces where the ratio of population to that of the pivotal province, Quebec, had materially changed. Under cover of granting Ontario four additional representatives, the boundaries of fifty electoral divisions were redrawn, with complete disregard of county boundaries or consistent principles. There was no question that the purpose was, in Macdonald's phrase, "to hive the Grits," and to snatch for the party in power an unfair advantage at the polls. Blake riddled the inconsistencies and denounced the injustice of the project, but the majority paid no heed. The gerrymander was forced through. Macdonald had won; Blake had lost. What was more serious, parliament and the country had lost: for many a year the level of political life in Canada was lowered by this triumph of unscrupulous partisanship.

The general elections were held on June 20, 1882. Neither Blake nor Laurier had any expectation of winning, but they hoped that the government's majority would be cut. The result left the parties virtually as they were. The government once more carried two seats to one, with a majority in every province except Prince Edward Island and Manitoba. Quebec continued to be the chief Conservative stronghold, returning three Conservatives to one Liberal, whereas in Ontario the popular vote was evenly divided, though the gerry-

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mander gave the government three seats to two.<sup>1</sup> None of the government leaders were defeated; among the Liberals, Cartwright, Mills, Huntington, Anglin, Smith, Jones, Laird, and Laflamme had fallen. Mr. Laurier was re-elected by a safe but decreased majority in Quebec East. The country was too prosperous to seek a change. Manufacturers, shareholders in Northwest colonization companies, dealers in railway supplies, wished to let well enough alone. As for the Canadian Pacific, the country wanted the road, and did not care to read the fine print in the contract. Depression had killed the Mackenzie government; prosperity gave the Macdonald government a new lease of life.

	1878		1882	
	Conservatives	Liberals	Conservatives	Liberals
Prince Edward Island	5	1	4	2
Nova Scotia	14	7	15	6
New Brunswick	5	11	10	6
Quebec	45	20	48	17
Ontario	59	29	54	38
Manitoba	3	1	2	3
British Columbia	6	0	6	0
Total	137	69	139	72

## CHAPTER VI

### RAIL AND RIEL

Blake, the Orange Order, and Home Rule—The Canadian Pacific in Difficulties—The Strike of the Bleus—The Crisis Surmounted—The Prairie in Transition—The Half-Breed Grievances—Riel's Career—The Storm Breaks—The Hanging of Riel—The Parliamentary Debate—The Issue in Ontario and Quebec—Saskatchewan Muskets—Laurier's Indictment—Before Ontario Audiences—The Aftermath.

**T**HE parliament which met in February, 1883, and was dissolved in January, 1887, was the fifth since Confederation, the fourth under Macdonald's premiership, the second with Blake leading the Opposition. In its four sessions the tariff counted little; for the earlier years the Canadian Pacific dominated discussion, and at the close the Franchise Act and the Riel rebellion.

Macdonald changed but did not strengthen his cabinet. Sir Charles Tupper succeeded Sir A. T. Galt as Canadian High Commissioner in London, endeavouring at the same time to hold his post as Minister of Railways. He was keen to try his hand at the diplomatic tasks opening up in Britain and the Continent, but did not wish to be side-tracked at home, and so for two years he shuttled back and forth across the Atlantic. John Carling, John Costigan, Frank Smith, and A. W.

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McLelan were the new men, with J. A. Chapleau in J. A. Mousseau's stead.

After his first disappointment at the size of the government's majority, Blake was heartened by the rise of issues which gave the scope and promise he desired. The intricacies of the financing of the Canadian Pacific particularly appealed to him, and he made himself master of the situation. The only drawback to his interest was that he was so much the master that nothing was left for his lieutenants but to repeat some of the countless points he had made. Not until the franchise debate toward the parliament's end was a satisfactory division of labour arranged and full use made of the abundant capacity in the ranks behind him. Outside of the House, Blake carried on an active and persistent campaign. Now or never, he believed, the government must be overthrown.

Laurier continued to divide his time between his law practice, his library, and the House. Arthabaska still gave a pleasant home and a comfortable practice; he found time in 1882 to perform the onerous duties of mayor. In the House he took part in the debates rarely, and only on the major issues. Outside he spoke frequently, mainly in Quebec. He joined Blake in a speaking tour through the Eastern Townships in the summer of 1883 and Cartwright in Montreal later. At Mercier banquets, at St. Jean-Baptiste celebrations, at the Club National's annual dinner, he discussed politics and public life with a power of detachment, of seeing woods as well as the trees, of scrupulous fairness com-

bined with vigorous condemnation, which gave him a place apart in the life of Quebec.

The provincial situation gave ground for reasoned hope. In Quebec, the bitter fight between the Chapeau and the Castor wings of the Conservatives and the indefatigable assaults of Mercier were undermining the government's position. To the older Liberals, more attached to principles than to office, it was, however, not wholly satisfactory to see the way to a Liberal victory being paved by an alliance between Mercier and the most irreconcilable among the Castors. A reorganization of the government under Dr. J. J. Ross, gave somewhat more weight to the Castor wing, but did not wholly heal the breach.

In Ontario, Mowat was again victorious in the general elections of 1883, though with a reduced majority. Mowat forced the fighting on the provincial-rights issue, called a Liberal convention which proclaimed undying resistance to jealous premiers and jealous Bleus, fought the boundary case and its sequel through in the courts, won out on the control of liquor-licensing, and wore out Macdonald's resistance by passing again and again his Rivers and Streams Bill. Handicapped by the unpopular side in these repeated controversies, Meredith sought to change the ground. Each party accused the other of angling for the Irish Catholic vote. Certainly the relations between Mowat and Archbishop Lynch were extremely cordial and the influence of the palace was thrown to the Liberal side. On the other hand, a frank if not flagrant bid for support was



made by the Conservative forces, seemingly not without Meredith's knowledge, by the issue on the eve of the 1883 election of a pamphlet, "Facts for the Irish Electors," declaring that the Conservative party had been "the faithful sentinel of our interests," and that Mowat had always been an enemy and Meredith a friend. After the election the Opposition swung around and struck for the ultra-Protestant vote. Was not Archbishop Lynch Oliver Mowat's father confessor? Had not the government submitted the "Ross Bible," a collection of Scripture readings for public schools, prepared under the direction of the Minister of Education, George W. Ross, to Archbishop Lynch, who had suggested the substitution of "which" for "who" in the Lord's Prayer, and did not all Protestants, in the words of a fervent orator, stand for "the Bible, the whole damned Bible"? Had not the same sinister influence resulted in the exclusion of Scott's "Marmion" from the school curriculum because of its assumed reflections on the Church? Meredith himself did not relish "riding George Brown's old Protestant horse," but many of his followers had no such scruple.

In the federal house a somewhat parallel situation arose. By accident or by design Blake took a stand on two questions, Irish Home Rule and the incorporation of the Orange Order, which was calculated to win the sympathies of the Catholic and particularly the Irish Catholic voter. Macdonald's power had rested for many a year on the votes of Catholic Quebec; there could have been no complaint had Blake deliberately

sought a similar support in other provinces. Yet, so far as that subtle mind may be understood, it seems clear that Blake's stand was taken because of deep and sincere conviction.

The Loyal Orange Association, which had grown up in Ulster as a secret society seeking to perpetuate "the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good King William who saved us from popery, slavery, knavery, brass money and wooden shoes," and incidentally to maintain Protestant ascendancy, was stronger in Canada than in any other country outside Ireland itself. Particularly in Ontario, it was overwhelmingly Conservative in sympathies. The leaders of the order, therefore, were not unmindful of the embarrassment which might be caused a Grit government when in 1873 they pressed in the Ontario house for incorporation. The bills were passed by a slight majority and with a divided cabinet, but Mowat had them reserved for the governor-general's pleasure, only to have Macdonald decline to take any such responsibility and to send them back to Toronto. In the following session Mowat introduced and passed a general measure whereunder any benevolent society might find incorporation, but the Orangemen pressed again and again for more direct recognition. Then in 1883, with much division of opinion, they sought in the Dominion house a general incorporating act which would give them standing and the right to hold property in every province. The government induced its sponsors to drop the bill, but it came up again in 1884. Blake was not content to give a

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silent vote. Speaking appropriately on March 17, he declared that the matter was wholly for the provinces, that no secret society should be given state recognition and that the Orange order was merely a disguised branch of the Tory party. The measure was thrown out by the Liberal and Quebec vote, and not again brought forward. Blake was lectured, pamphleted, attacked from all quarters, but he held to his position.

On the Home Rule issue, Blake felt still more keenly. A Protestant of Protestants, evangelical in all his traditions and surroundings, great-grandson of a man who had been killed fighting the insurgents of '98, he had yet been brought by his study of Irish history to an intense and abiding sympathy with Irish aspirations and a vigorous condemnation of the arrogance and stupidity of English policy. Now that Parnell and Gladstone were making Home Rule a fighting issue, he and the great majority of men of Southern Irish descent in Canada felt that Canada should have a word to say in the settlement. They met with stubborn opposition. Ulstermen were numerous and well organized; the memories of Fenian plots and Fenian Raid fiascoes were strong in Canada; besides, if Canada claimed the right of self-government, why not permit the United Kingdom to enjoy the same privilege? When in 1882 John Costigan, Macdonald's leading Irish-Catholic supporter, introduced in the Commons a resolution advocating Home Rule, Blake supported it vigorously, and condemned Costigan for his weakness in consenting to water down his original resolution to meet Macdonald's

objections. When Lord Kimberley, Secretary for the Colonies, snubbed the Canadian parliament frigidly for its presumption, Blake declined to be snubbed by a Kimberley, and returned to the charge. In 1886 he raised the question in a powerful speech, and once more put the Canadian parliament on record.

But these were only side issues. In the new parliament, the Canadian Pacific continued to be the foremost question. The going was now becoming harder for the railway and incidentally for the government. It had been comparatively easy to build a road through the prairie, and though the plains to the west presented some engineering difficulties, and it was necessary to transport supplies long distances, the obstacles hitherto had been in no way unprecedented. But now the company was facing the mountain and Lake Superior sections. Its engineers had to find a way through the seemingly hopeless tangle of mountain peaks in the Selkirk range which faced the Kicking Horse Pass, to carve a track down the cañons of the Columbia and to guard the line against the threatened avalanche of mountain snows. North of Lake Superior they had to bridge a way over swamp and muskeg so voracious that to-day in one muskeg area seven layers of Canadian Pacific rails are buried, one below the other, and to blast a way through miles of Laurentian rock so massive and unyielding that it was necessary to build a dynamite factory on the spot and to spend half to three-quarters of a million a mile on more than one stretch of road.

At the same time the promise of rapid settlement and

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development of the West faded away. Frost and drought fell on the land and settlers who had not yet learned the ways of the country reaped little for their pains. The Manitoba boom collapsed, homesteaders abandoned their holdings, mushroom cities fell away again into prairie, colonization companies were wound up and Eastern speculators saw their profits shrivel to nothingness. Homestead entries, which reached 7,500 in 1882, fell to one-half that number in 1883, and one-fourth in 1885. Later, the North-West rebellion, the discontent produced by monopoly railway rates and the high price of farm implements, the counter attractions of Minnesota and Dakota and the adverse propaganda of rival railways deterred settlement. Not for a score of years was the West to come into its own and justify the faith of those who had urged and those who had shared in its development. With construction tasks ahead which would call for tremendous outlay and with the West and Western lands condemned by the sudden slackening of settlement, the Canadian Pacific in 1883 faced a series of financial crises which all but brought it to bankruptcy.

The company's situation was made more difficult by the necessity of acquiring feeders and connections, particularly in the East. It was realized from the beginning that so long as the Canadian Pacific remained a single-track road which began in the wilderness near Lake Nipissing and ended on the untenanted Pacific it was not likely to secure paying traffic. The management therefore sought to build or buy or lease branches

in the thickly settled territories of the East which soon equalled in mileage the whole main line. The greater part of this expansion was effected through leases or the organization of subsidiary companies, involving no great drain on the treasury of the parent road. Yet some mortgaging of the company's funds was involved, and what was perhaps more serious, the Grand Trunk was roused by this invasion of its preserves to assail its young rival at home and block it in the money markets across the sea.

The financing of the Canadian Pacific presented several unique features. The country contributed the major part of the funds required for construction. It presented the company with a clear gift of seven hundred miles of road, which cost the government over \$35,000,000 to survey and build but undoubtedly was worth much less to the company. It granted a cash subsidy of \$25,000,000, paid as earned, a larger proportion being assigned per mile to the mountain and Lake Superior sections than to the plains. It granted a land subsidy of 25,000,000 acres of selected land. The land was not immediately available; the competition of the free homestead land alongside, and the campaign of depreciation carried on by the Grand Trunk offset the energetic endeavours of the company to find settlers and a market for its holdings. Bonds issued on the security of the land grant met little greater response. By 1885 some \$11,000,000 had been secured from this source.

The amount of private capital invested during con-

struction was less than the promoters expected and less than the interests of both the company and the country required. The millions of English, French, and German capitalists proved a mirage, and the original nucleus of the syndicate, the St. Paul group, found themselves compelled to shoulder a greater part of the burden than they had foreseen. In seeking capital, to an extent unprecedented in railway history they relied upon the sale of shares, and avoided the issuing of bonds. This policy was adopted deliberately as a result of close study of the fate of many United States roads which had found themselves hopelessly waterlogged by excessive bond issues, and had been forced by foreclosure out of the original shareholders' hands. If it succeeded, fixed charges would be kept low until earning power was well developed. Whether or not it could succeed was more doubtful: to market the stock at a price which would bring into the treasury funds comparable to what could have been secured by the sale of bonds was no easy task. The first issues of stock were marketed at a heavy discount. Of the \$100,000,000 authorized, the first \$5,000,000 was subscribed by the syndicate at par, and the next \$10,000,000 at 25; \$50,000,000 additional was sold privately or through American bankers at prices netting about 50; from the \$65,000,000 stock issued during the construction period about \$31,000,000 came into the treasury. It was partly with the intention of making the stock attractive that the company paid interest on it, water and all, from

the beginning. The Railway Act permitted the payment of interest during construction, but not to exceed six per cent. on the actual investment.

Toward the close of 1883 the company seemed to have reached the end of its tether. Funds were badly needed, and investors were coy. To meet this situation, the executive, fortified by the advice of New York and London financiers, adopted the precarious policy of using current funds to secure future dividends and thus render the stock more attractive to prudent purchasers. They undertook to purchase from the Dominion government a guaranty of a three per cent. dividend for ten years on the stock already issued, by depositing \$16,000,000, the cost of such a terminable annuity calculated at four per cent. Over half of this sum was deposited in cash, and security given for the early payment of the balance. A similar provision was to be made on the sale of any part of the remaining \$35,000,000 of unissued stock. This dividend might be supplemented from any current surplus available, but for ten years shareholders would be assured at least of their three per cent.

The policy was of doubtful expediency at the best. It meant locking up for dividends funds that were urgently needed for construction. It was not calculated to reassure investors as to the earnings of the road once the ten-year guaranty expired. It was open to serious criticism from the point of view of the people who were advancing the main share of the funds. What would have been the outcome of the guaranty policy, had it



been persistently followed, is matter for conjecture. Scarcely had the arrangement been made when the smash of the Northern Pacific sent all Western railway stocks down in sympathy, and Canadian Pacific sold lower than before the guaranty. Clearly, rescue would not come from the general investing public:

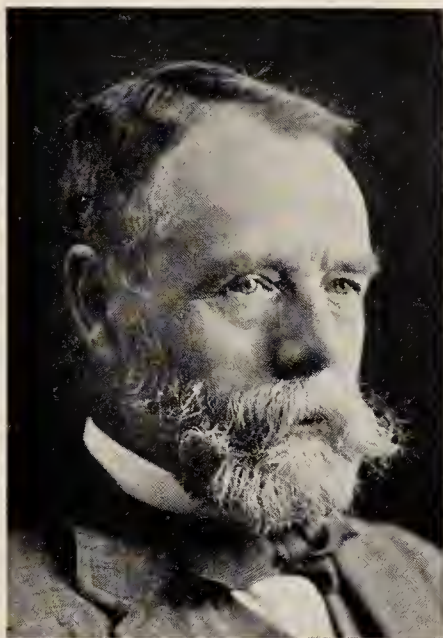
In this emergency the Canadian members of the syndicate gave of their cash and credit to the utmost. Stephen and Smith pledged their St. Paul and other stocks in Montreal and New York to make advances to the road, but to no lasting purpose. There seemed only one recourse left,—the silent partner who had sunk so much in the road that perchance he could not refuse to advance the remainder. They determined to ask the government for a loan of \$22,500,000. Twenty-odd million, it must be remembered, meant infinitely more in the frugal eighties than it meant in later years when heady prosperity and particularly unsettling war and rash inflation had changed all standards. In the eighties it meant nearly a whole year's revenue of the federal government.

Late in the winter of 1883 Stephen, Angus, McIntyre, Van Horne, and the C. P. R. solicitor, J. J. C. Abbott, went down to Ottawa to seek to convince Sir John of their and the country's necessity.<sup>1</sup> They drove out at night to Earnscliffe, and put their case before him, making it plain that every other resource had been exhausted and that the sum they asked was the least re-

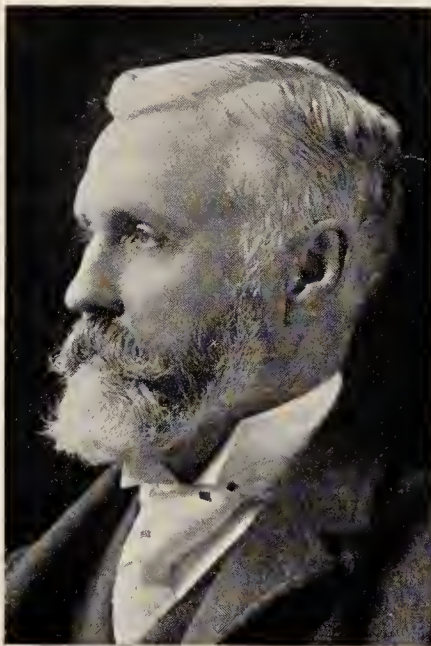
<sup>1</sup> The writer is indebted to the late Sir William Van Horne for the details of this incident.

quired to see them through. Macdonald heard them patiently, but gave no comfort: "Gentlemen, I need not detain you long. You might as well ask for the planet Jupiter. I would not give you the millions you ask, and if I did the cabinet would not agree, and if they did it would smash the party. Now, gentlemen, I did not have much sleep last night, and I should like to get to bed. I am sorry, but there is no use discussing the question further." They tried to argue the matter, but he would not listen. Somewhat apprehensive, from the beginning, of the greatness of the country's risk, sharing in the reaction that had come with the slackening of settlement and the bankruptcy of Western roads, not convinced that this application would be the last, fully aware of the opening a further loan would give an eager Opposition, Macdonald felt the time had come to call a halt. He bowed the petitioners out and went to bed.

Blue and dejected and silent, Stephen and his associates drove back to town, to wait for the four-o'clock morning train to Montreal. They decided to spend the hours that intervened at the old Bank of Montreal cottage. Here John Henry Pope, who was acting Minister of Railways during Tupper's absence in England, had rooms. They found him lying on a couch, reading, with a strong habitant cigar in his mouth and a glass of whiskey at his side. He turned over, offered cigars, put his feet up on a chair, and questioned, "Well, what's up?" Stephen told him briefly, while McIntyre danced about excitedly. Pope



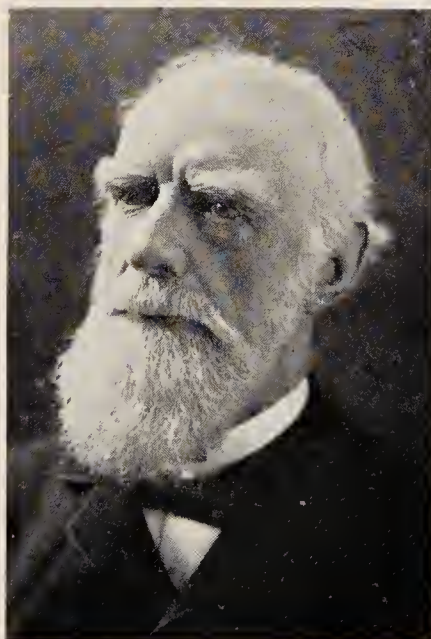
George Stephen  
Later Lord Mount Stephen  
First President



Richard B. Angus  
Vice-President



Sir William C. Van Horne  
General Manager and later President



Donald Smith  
Later Lord Strathcona  
Director

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listened, got up slowly, lighted another cigar, put on his old otter cap and shaggy coat, called a carriage—it was then after one o'clock—and departed, with the words, "Wait till I get back." An hour and a half later he returned, entered without a word, kicked off his rubbers, hung up cap and coat, poured out another glass of whiskey, and lighted a cigar, all with deliberation and an impassive face, while his visitors waited, with their hearts in their mouths, for the fateful word. "Well, boys," he broke the silence at last, "he'll do it. Stay over till to-morrow." Pope had roused Macdonald out of bed and put the case before him with the intimacy of an old friend and the effectiveness of a shrewd party counsellor. "The day the Canadian Pacific busts," he summed it up, "the Conservative party busts the day after."

The deputation saw Sir John and his colleagues the next morning. Macdonald was grouchy; Alexander Campbell opposed any further aid; Tilley, the Minister of Finance, wanted to take the road over. Pope fought it through in council, and the agreement was made. It still remained to convince the party. For this no half-hearted convictions would suffice. Tupper was cabled to return from England. He approved the cabinet's decision, and stormed it through caucus, appealing to the members as party men, whose fortunes were bound up with the road's success, and as Canadians, who could not allow a great national enterprise to fail within sight of completion. To give the appearance of a *quid pro quo*, the company was to agree to

complete the transcontinental line by May 1, 1886, five years in advance of the time provided in the contract. The majority appeared to be convinced, but danger was not yet over. The Quebec Bleus determined to take advantage of the government's straits to force through another railway deal which had hitherto hung fire. The Conservative administration in Quebec was in financial difficulties, as a result of extravagance and jobbery. It had put itself in funds once by the sale of the provincial North Shore Railway, from Quebec to Montreal and Ottawa, to a local syndicate and eventually to the Canadian Pacific. The policy announced by the Dominion government in 1882 of subsidizing new roads which though wholly within one province might be considered of general advantage seemed to open a way for further relief. The provincial government and the Bleu members at Ottawa demanded that this policy be made retroactive so far as the North Shore line was concerned. The cabinet had refused. Now the Bleus had the government at their mercy. They withdrew from the House during the debates on the Pacific resolutions, meeting in conference by themselves, while M. Mousseau and his colleagues in the provincial administration came to Ottawa to join in presenting the ultimatum. Finally, Macdonald capitulated and the strike was called off. The government's majority was safe, and the Opposition, if it could not be answered, was at least outvoted.

When the resolution granting the province of Quebec \$2,394,000, "in consideration of their having con-

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structed the railway from Quebec to Ottawa . . . a work of national and not merely provincial utility," was before the House, Blake moved and Laurier seconded an amendment deprecating singling out Quebec for such aid when other provinces had equally devoted large sums to building roads of national utility. Laurier particularly warned the members from Quebec against the danger of coercive action:

It is always a fault on the part of a minority in any legislative assembly to throw obstacles in the way of a government in order to force them to act against their will. . . . All questions coming before this House should be decided according to justice, equity and fairness. If the Pacific resolutions were just and reasonable, it was their duty to adopt them; if they were unjust and unreasonable, it was their duty to object to them. There is in the Dominion no body of men who should always be so careful to adhere to principles of justice as the Quebec contingent in this House, which must always be in a minority.

For this stand, Laurier was warmly attacked in the province of Quebec, but he held a great open-air meeting in the Champ de Mars, in Quebec city, and was triumphantly endorsed by his constituents; his old school friend and later political antagonist, Israel Tarte, editor of the chief Quebec Conservative organ, "Le Canadien," who was for the moment at outs with his party, joined in his defence.

The Pacific crisis had passed for the moment, but soon it reappeared. The loan was quickly exhausted in rapid and costly construction. The government, as security for the advance, had taken a mortgage not only

on the main line but on all the company's interests in the Eastern branch lines, their unsold stock, and their land grant. When further funds were needed, it was found impossible to borrow or to sell stock with a blanket mortgage covering every asset of the road. Once more in the winter of 1884-85, the directors approached the government. They had been forced at last to abandon their policy of relying on stock rather than on bond issues. They requested that the unissued \$35,000,000 stock in the government's hands be cancelled, that an equal amount of five per cent. first-mortgage bonds be issued, and that the government should accept a portion of this issue as its security, leaving the balance free for disposal in open market. The government refused any further aid or variation. Early in January Van Horne met Pope: "Why not put us out of our misery? Let us go off into some corner and bust?" Pope replied that the government was too much afraid of what Louis Riel and his half-breed followers in the North-West might do, to undertake any further entanglements. They feared a dangerous outbreak in the spring. Riel's emissaries were out stirring up the Indian tribes. When the grass grew, the Indians would move. Three thousand men could cope with them at the start; later it might take two years and fifty thousand men. "I wish your C. P. R. was through." Van Horne had had experience in military transportation during the Civil War. "When could your regiments be ready?" "The first or second week in March." Van Horne told Pope and later the council that he could



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get regiments through from Kingston or Quebec to Qu'Appelle on the Saskatchewan in ten days. The members of council did not credit him. "Has any one a better plan?" asked Macdonald. None had, and Van Horne was told to prepare. There was a stretch of two hundred and fifty miles between Dog Lake and Nipigon, which did not seem passable; in half of it no tracks were laid, and where rails were, rolling-stock was lacking. Yet six days after the first troops, the batteries from Kingston and Quebec, had left Ottawa, on March 28, they were in Winnipeg and could have been in Qu'Appelle in seven. When the troops reached the first gap of forty miles they were bundled into sleighs and driven along the tote-roads through the woods. Then came a stretch of ninety miles with rails laid but only three locomotives and forty flat-cars. The sleighs and teams were loaded on the cars and the whole outfit carried through the bitterly cold Lake Superior snows. Then a trackless gap, then a flat-car stretch, and so on to the end. In more than one place rails had been laid down over the snow and ice. Camps and provisions had been supplied along the way. It was a triumph of energy and organization. In 1870 it had taken Wolseley and his men more than two months to reach Fort Garry; had the same delay occurred in 1885, and assuming also that the government had persisted in its supine neglect of the grievances which gave Riel his opportunity, the half-breed rebellion and the Indian rising would have proved infinitely more dangerous and destructive. Why, knowing the danger,

the government took no effective steps to check it in advance, is another question.

The national service thus conspicuously rendered by the Canadian Pacific made the government more amenable to its requests and the Opposition less vigorous in its resistance. Van Horne even suggested that the Canadian Pacific ought to erect a monument to Louis Riel. The government agreed to cancel the \$35,000,000 stock and authorized the issue of a similar amount of bonds. For the thirty millions which were due it from the company, including the 1884 loan and the balance due on the 1883 guaranty agreement, it was arranged to accept \$20,000,000 first-mortgage bonds, and the unsold twenty million acres of the land grant as full security. Of the \$15,000,000 bonds thus available for sale, the company was to deposit \$8,000,000 as security for a temporary one-year loan of \$5,000,000.

Yet the company was not yet out of the woods. The Opposition must register its criticisms and point to the confirmation of its earlier prophecies, while the government was not prepared to carry through the necessary legislation until the success of other measures was assured.

All that could be said against the government's policy, in this and previous years, was said in an extraordinarily comprehensive and powerful speech by Blake, which was said to have taken seven weeks to prepare and seven hours to deliver. Replying to Pope and Chapleau, who had moved the government resolutions, Blake asked why they had neglected to refer to

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the acquisition by the Canadian Pacific of the Laurentian road, in which Mr. Chapleau's friends were interested, or the International, equally close to Mr. Pope; scored the lack of detailed information in the company's financial reports, the use of company funds to sustain artificially the stock of the Canada North-West Land Company, and the bargain, on terms not revealed, with a construction company in which the railway directors were interested; attacked the policy of rapid and reckless construction, increasing cost, scattering settlement, and stimulating speculation; insisted that the company's difficulties were due to its own peculiar financial policies; calculated the aid given by the government, in cash subsidy, loans, and the proceeds of lands or land bonds sold, omitting completed government road and unsold lands, to the close of 1884, at \$60,000,000, and the cost up to that time of the construction and equipment of the main line at only \$58,000,000; declared that the \$37,000,000 raised by the company from private sources had gone half into Eastern expansion and connections and half into paying or securing dividends; calculated that up to February, 1886, the company would have paid out in dividends or set aside to pay future dividends \$24,500,000, which was exactly the sum invested, excluding the last pending issue of \$10,000,000 stock, disposed of for half its par value, so that "in substance the proceeds of the stock are divided among the stockholders; we are to raise money to build the road, and the country is to pay tolls for all time to meet the dividends on

the stock so divided"; and concluded by demanding that the company, instead of seeking \$15,000,000 fresh money, should take back the \$14,000,000 left in the government's hands for dividends, and put it into the building of the road.

D'Alton McCarthy, in the only other speech in the debate which was at all comparable to Blake's in force and keenness, replied that the expenditure on Eastern branches was indispensable and rightly considered a part of the original plan; that the money paid out or set aside for dividends as yet was only \$20,000,000 and that some \$7,000,000 of this was furnished by the government and set aside as a charge against the road; that the guaranty arrangement, while extraordinary, was made in good faith and on expert advice as the only feasible way of securing further funds; and that the money thus set aside had been entrusted by the government to the Bank of Montreal for the payment of dividends, that shares had been sold on the strength of this agreement, and that the money could not be withdrawn without repudiation and breaking of faith.

It was, however, not the Opposition's argument but the government's delays that worried the company. Though the government had a majority of nearly two to one in the Commons, they were not finding it easy to jam through the long and contentious programme of legislation they had prepared. The session was the longest in Canadian annals, lasting from January 29 to July 20. Aside from the North-West rebellion and the Canadian Pacific issue, other questions proved con-

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tentious, prohibition of liquor traffic, civil-service reform, subsidies to minor railways, and particularly the Franchise Bill, devised to substitute in federal elections a uniform federal property franchise, based on lists prepared by federal agents, for the provincial franchise, based on lists prepared by provincial and, incidentally, Liberal, agencies. Seven-hour speeches, an unbroken three-days' sitting, and ninety-three divisions of the House, were features of the contest.

To no one did the session appear so long as to the directors of the Canadian Pacific. Macdonald insisted that the railway legislation would not be passed until the Franchise Bill was out of the way; he would not risk the postponement of a measure on which he had so set his heart, and considered it good tactics to compel all other seekers of legislation to use their influence to clear the way. The middle of July came, and the railway was in hard straits. Its credit and the credit of its backers had again been stretched to the breaking point. The credit of its friends had been utilized; Frank Smith, who besides being a cabinet minister in Ottawa was a wholesale merchant in Toronto, had given credit for essential supplies beyond the point of safety. A payment of four hundred thousand dollars had to be made before three o'clock on July 11, to a creditor who declined to accept any renewal. The Canadian Pacific, which in later days could borrow at will by the hundred million, could not meet this claim. Its directors faced a receivership and loss of control. At twelve o'clock the bill passed and the road

was saved. Stephen went to London, and without difficulty floated the \$15,000,000 bonds through the Barings. The \$5,000,000 borrowed from the government was returned without being used, the company incidentally finding almost as much difficulty in giving it back as in securing it, since Mackenzie Bowell, who was acting premier during Sir John's absence in England, could not understand a railway paying back a loan ahead of time, and suspected a trap.

On November 7, 1885, the last spike in the main line was driven. A train carrying Smith, Van Horne, and Sandford Fleming had come through from Montreal to Craigellachie, in Eagle Pass in the Gold Range, where eastward and westward track-layers were to meet. Van Horne had determined there would be no ceremonious speeches or driving of golden spikes. Less than two years before, the Northern Pacific had celebrated its completion by organizing an excursion, at a cost of a third of a million, to take part in driving a last golden spike, and as the train laden with investors and brokers and champagne passed through what seemed to the watchers from the car windows the hopelessly arid deserts of Montana, on a scorching summer day, the guests had one by one slipped out at passing stations to use their free telegram blanks to order their stock unloaded; and scarcely had the golden spike been driven when the road was bankrupt. But Smith would drive a spike, if an iron one, and Van Horne gave him his way. The train passed on to Port Moody, crossing the continent in exactly five days.

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To the general public, the great task was over. To the men in control, it was only beginning. Ballast had to be laid, wooden trestles filled with earth or replaced with stone or steel, curves straightened, grades lessened, rolling-stock increased, and terminals built or extended. What was more difficult, traffic had to be built up. For a thousand miles the road ran through mountain range and rocky waste. Even in plains and prairie, settlement had gone little way: when the Canadian Pacific began construction, the white settlers in the belt of twenty miles on each side of the line between Portage la Prairie and Kamloops, some twelve hundred miles, could be counted on the fingers of one hand. To find business the company capitalized its scenery, carried buffalo bones while waiting for wheat, pushed its Ontario and Quebec extensions, developed traffic at both United States ends of the line, sought settlers in England, aided industries at strategic points, organized a loyal and efficient staff, and by unremitting effort met operating expenses, paid a dividend, and accumulated a surplus every year from the beginning. The company's obligations to the government were promptly met. In March, 1886, the cash advanced upon the security of the \$20,000,000 bonds was repaid, and for the balance of the indebtedness the government agreed to take back some six million acres of the land grant at \$1.50 per acre. By the following year the company was in uncontrolled possession of its property, and the prophecies of repudiation confounded.

The Canadian Pacific was not a vital issue in the

general election of 1887. The road was built; the loans had been repaid. What would be its measure of eventual success, whether the prophecies of monopoly and stagnation would come true, were matters for future accounting. Issues that appealed more to the average voter had arisen. And yet the Canadian Pacific was not out of politics, as the election of 1891 was to make clear.

Now in the middle eighties the sudden flare of armed rebellion and bloody conflict drove all thought of abstruse constitutional disputes and tariff or railway issues from men's minds. The insurrection of the French-Canadian half-breeds on the banks of the Saskatchewan in 1885 put the newly cemented unity of the Dominion to a perilous test. And hardly had the hasty levies of Canadian volunteers restored order in the West, when in the East a yet severer strain came with the outburst once more of the sectional and racial and religious strife which Confederation had sought to allay.

Canada had had its share of the difficulties that face a colonizing people in contact with a less advanced civilization. In dealing with the Indian tribes who held the land when the white man came, no small success had been attained. The British government had set a splendid example of just and considerate treatment, and Canadian governments fully maintained that policy. The country was spared the countless breaches of faith which marked the dealings of the United States



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with its Indian wards, and spared the wars and massacres which followed as retribution. But in dealing with the half-breeds of the Western plains the Canadian government displayed neither understanding nor diligence, and the penalty was paid in the disturbances on the Red River in 1870 and on the Saskatchewan in 1885.

When the Dominion took over from the Hudson's Bay Company the vast Western empire which had long been held as a hunting-preserve, Canadians hastened to enter the promised land. Local administrations were set up, roads and railways built, lands surveyed, homestead policies adopted. It was recognized that the land was not wholly masterless. Tens of thousands of Indians, Cree and Blackfoot, Piegan and Sarcee, Chipe-wyan and Ojibway, still roamed the plains. Treaties were made to extinguish the Indian title, granting the Indians in return ample reserves and moderate annuities. So far, so good, but equal care was not taken to help the half-breed adjust himself to the new conditions. The half-breed descendants of the French or Scotch or more rarely English hunters and traders of early days and the Indian women with whom they mated, formed communities distinct alike from Indian and from white. They manned the canoes, drove the Red River carts, hunted the buffalo, and gathered the furs for company and private trader, and in more ways than one linked the peoples from which they were sprung. A simple people, of few needs, reckless and light-hearted, they were none too well prepared for the new way of life that

came with the opening of the West to settlement. It was not merely new governors and irksome laws, but a change in the economic basis of the community that came upon them; reckless hunting and the activities of American traders brought the endless herds of buffalo to an end, and the railway brought a flood of settlers into the plains. The old free days were over.

For such a people the shift from a nomadic hunting life to a settled agricultural one would have involved difficulties at best. The bungling and dilatoriness of the new governing authority doubled the difficulty. On the Red River the failure of the Canadian government to realize that the wilderness they were taking over held thousands of men with hopes and fears and pride of their own, men who were not content to be transferred to newcomers like herds of cattle, led to resistance which the Canadian government—in which at the time no shred of legal right to the Red River territory was vested—humorously termed “a rebellion.” The government mended its ways, conceded the community immediate self-government, and gave liberal land grants to the old settlers; only the echoes of Riel’s fatal blunder in the execution of Scott disturbed the further development of the Red River country. But the transition was not yet completed. Thousands of half-breeds, irked by the closer settlement or fleeced of their land-scrip by the greed of speculators and their own improvidence, had drifted away, some south of the border, but the greater number further west, settling along the far-winding banks of the Saskatchewan. Even here, as for the

Boers in earlier days trekking further and further from the seats of authority, isolation did not last long; government land-agents and surveyors, mounted police and magistrates, came north as the advance guard of the great wave of settlement that was expected with the completion of the Canadian Pacific.

For a second time the problem of adjustment arose and for a second time it was bungled. The half-breeds on the Saskatchewan sought certain privileges. They asked for patents for the lands on which they had squatted before the surveyor came. They asked that the river-lot system of surveying should be adopted in their settlements rather than the rectangular; they had staked out their land according to the custom in force on the Red River, and on the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu for centuries before, in long narrow strips, twenty or forty chains wide and a few miles deep, sometimes with pasture-land running two miles further back, a system which strung all the households close together along the sociable river street; and now the government's surveyors were applying the American system of rectangular sections and townships, perfectly logical and geometrically exact, but taking no heed of the lie of the country, or the social instincts of the settlers. They demanded, also, that every half-breed should be granted scrip for a quarter-section of land or thereabouts, in extinguishment of the Indian title; in Manitoba it had been agreed that the half-breeds, while entitled, like white men, to earn a homestead by fulfilling settlement duties, should, in virtue of their Indian blood, receive a free grant of a

few acres of land in the many-million-acred country to which their ancestors had the claim of first occupation.

The requests were just and reasonable. There was no valid ground for refusal or delay in granting patents. The river-lot method of survey, while not without its drawbacks, in itself and as a part of a wide system, had a clear balance of convenience in its favour. The demand for scrip was more controversial. It might be held illogical, as the government contended, for the half-breeds to claim both the white man's homestead and the Indian's free grant, but the homestead was given on fulfilling settlement duties and the free grant on claims of blood; the Manitoba precedent could not be set aside, and in any case the area involved was but a speck on the map in comparison with the vast domains available and out of which tens of millions of acres were being carved for railway-builders and colonization companies. It might be urged that the granting of scrip would prove of no lasting benefit either to the half-breed or to the country; in Manitoba the half-breeds, like the Canadian volunteers of 1870 to whom similar grants had been made, had for the most part sold their claims for a few dollars or gallons of whiskey to speculators who thereupon held choice lands out of use and forced real settlers to go far from town and railway. There was no doubt, further, that speculators in the Saskatchewan country, and particularly in Prince Albert, were egging the half-breeds on, with very definite designs upon their scrip. Yet this did not lessen the force of the half-breeds' claim, and, had the govern-

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ment willed, ways could have been found to prevent the alienation of the land for a time.

Beginning in the last years of the Mackenzie régime, and increasing in urgency with the imminence of the rush of settlers from the East, the half-breeds pressed their claims. Petition after petition was sent to Ottawa; money was scraped together to send a deputation to the same far tribune; local officials and even the North-West Council, a nominated body of little more than advisory powers, urged compliance. Sometimes a little was done; the Scotch half-breeds at Prince Albert were given their river-lot surveys, but this only emphasized still more the grievance of the French half-breeds at St. Laurent. Often much was promised, only to be forgotten. Time and again the authorities undertook to give the matter their most careful consideration. Then the petitions were pigeonholed and the Métis waited in vain. The petitioners were few and far away; they had no votes, no representation in parliament. From 1878 to 1883 the Ministry of the Interior, to which was confided the oversight of the Western territories, was in the hands of Sir John Macdonald, never interested in the details of administration, trustful, as his nickname of "Old To-morrow" indicated, in the healing power of procrastination, and so little interested in the West that until 1886 he never set foot in the domain which had so long been under his charge. From 1883 to 1885 the ministry fell to Sir David Macpherson, an easy-going retired capitalist, more interested in the dignity than the duties of his

post. And while Ottawa slumbered, the Métis watched the rising of the tide of settlement and nursed their grievances.

The prairie was dry as tinder, but had not fate sent the spark the blaze might never have come. It was not the first time nor the last that ministers had lacked energy and sympathetic vision. Without the coming of Louis Riel, they and the country with them might have escaped the penalty. But unfortunately Riel had come.

Louis Riel was born in the Red River country in October, 1844. He had little Indian blood in his veins, but that little was enough to make him at home with his half-breed kindred. His father, Jean-Louis Riel, had come from Berthier in Quebec a few years before; on his father's side, Jean-Louis traced his descent through four generations of Canadian-born, back to a Reilly from Ireland and back of that again to a Reilson from Scandinavia; his mother—Louis Riel's grandmother—was a Montagnais Indian. Jean-Louis married Julie Lagimodière, the daughter of the first white woman to settle in the West; the mother, Marie Anne Gaboury, had come from the Three Rivers country in 1807 with her *coureur-de-bois* husband, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, narrowly escaping death by storm on the lakes and death by poison at the hands of a squaw with whom Jean-Baptiste had lived before going east, and had survived countless perils and hardships through a life of nearly a hundred years. Jean-Louis, married to the daughter Julie, in turn hunter, student for the

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priesthood, farmer and miller, became a leading figure in the Red River community and led the Métis in 1849 in resisting and smashing the claim of the Hudson's Bay Company to a monopoly of the trade in furs.

Louis Riel the younger early showed a precocious talent which drew the attention of Mgr. Taché. On his suggestion, a wealthy lady of Terrebonne, Quebec, Mme. Masson, had him sent to the College of Montreal in 1858, with a view to training for the priesthood. Riel's training ended abruptly in 1864. His father had died, leaving him head of a family of nine. More important, he had developed erratic traits which convinced Mgr. Taché of his unfitness for the service of the Church, dreaming wild dreams of a religious mission he was destined to perform, demanding from Montreal acquaintances \$10,000 to carry out his crusade, urging his feeble-minded old mother to sell her effects to aid him, and then, after she had journeyed four hundred miles by ox-cart to meet him, writing her that a new mission required him to remain in Montreal. After three years' aimless drifting in Montreal and the Western States, this "spoiled priest" or stickit minister came back to his father's farm at St. Vital.

The unrest prevalent in the settlement over the coming transfer of control from the Hudson's Bay Company to Canada, and the high-handed attitude of some of the Canadian party in Red River gave Riel his opportunity. His own faith in his destiny, the ascendancy which his half-learning, his mystic faith, his aggressive audacity, and his knowledge of Métis ways gave him

over his fellows, soon made him dominant in the community. The claims he championed were reasonable in the main, and Riel would have held a place as one of the minor prophets of liberty in Canada had it not been for the execution of Scott. Resistance always irritated and inflamed him and disturbed the precarious balance of his mind; like General Dyer of Amritsar, he could not endure the thought of being despised and laughed at for his weakness, and determined to teach a lesson to the minority which had challenged his control. It fell to Thomas Scott to play the victim. Scott, an Ontario pioneer, had served, none too peaceably, in a Dominion surveyor's party, had joined in the attempt of the Portage la Prairie settlers to overthrow Riel, and, when it failed, had been confined with his fellows in cold and crowded quarters in Fort Garry. A taunting word singled him out for disfavour, and after a farcical trial, without proof of the flimsy allegations brought against him, without defence, Scott was condemned for treason to the provisional government and next day, in spite of protest and intercession, met death at the hands of a firing-squad.

Scott was executed on March 4, 1870. On February 24, 1875, Riel was declared an outlaw. Through the intervening years Riel was the centre of a political storm. He had fled from Fort Garry a quarter-hour before Wolseley's troops arrived in August, 1870, sought refuge for a year south of the border, placed his Métis followers at Governor Archibald's disposal to fight the Fenian raid of 1871, accepted Macdonald's



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direct and indirect bribes of \$4,000 to leave the country till the elections of 1872 were over, escaped arrest a year later under a warrant for the murder of Scott, secured election unopposed to the House of Commons in 1874, and even appeared for an audacious moment in the House at Ottawa. Then came the general amnesty, with the provision that the pardon was to extend to Riel and Lepine only after five years' banishment.

Riel's banishment was brief. He spent a short period in the United States, undergoing confinement for a part of this time in a private asylum maintained by Major Edmond Mallet in Washington. But he was soon back in Canada, where the sympathy of the people of Quebec and the willingness of the Ottawa authorities to let slumbering dogs lie assured him safety. For three years his presence in the province was an open secret. Early in 1876 he entered a Montreal church and noisily interrupted mass, insisting that as he was superior to any of the dignitaries present he should be allowed to conduct the service. He was arrested and on the certificate of two doctors immured in Longue Pointe asylum, near Montreal, under the name of Louis David. His outbursts of violence proved too much for the sisters who conducted the asylum, and under the name of La-Rochelle, he was transferred to Beauport asylum, near Quebec. From these headquarters, during his lucid intervals, he sallied forth from time to time, travelling by the underground route from parish to parish.

It was during this period that Mr. Laurier had his first and last interview with Louis Riel. One Sunday

he was invited by the curé of a neighbouring village to come over for dinner, to meet an interesting guest. Mr. Laurier was surprised on entering the study to find himself face to face with the man whom he had helped to vote into temporary exile. He was much impressed by the vigour and daimonic personality of the Métis leader, and found him surprisingly fluent and, on the whole, well informed, on American and European politics. When, however, religion was touched upon, Riel's deep-set eyes lit up, and he launched into an excited and jumbled harangue, boasting vaguely of the great mission for the further revelation of God's will which a heavenly vision had urged him to undertake. From that day Laurier never had any question as to Riel's insanity, though he had as yet no surmise of the lengths to which this fatal twist was once more to drive him in the West.

Riel was discharged from Beauport in January, 1878. He returned to the United States, carried himself so strangely on the streets of Washington that he was taken in charge by the police, spent some months in Dr. Mallet's sanatorium, went west to Minnesota, and thence to a Métis colony at Sun River, Montana, where he opened a school, became the leader of the community, stirred up his fellows to resist paying customs duty, took it upon himself to hold an unauthorized poll during a local election, and in consequence found himself for a brief sojourn within the walls of Fort Benton. Later he became an American citizen, married a Métis woman with much Cree blood, and settled down as a teacher in

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a little industrial school maintained by a Jesuit father at St. Peter's Mission, in Montana. In the summer of 1883 he paid a visit to Red River, where he met his cousin and former co-worker, Napoleon Nault, a Métis trader, and possibly laid the lines for the invitation to return to Canada. A little later he seems to have made a visit to Quebec to consult eminent theologians as to his mission, and to have received little comfort.

It was to this strangely equipped leader that the half-breeds of the Saskatchewan turned when their grievances found no redress. Early in the summer of 1884 James Isbester, Moïse Ouellette, Michel Dumas, and Gabriel Dumont journeyed the seven hundred miles to Montana, and begged Riel to return to their aid. After some demur, he agreed, observing that he had claims of his own to press against the government. Making his headquarters at Batoche, on the South Saskatchewan, Riel began his agitation, quietly, and received much support not merely from the French and English half-breeds, but from English settlers who were feeling the pinch of drought and frost, of railway monopoly and tariff exactions, and welcomed any expression of discontent that might force Ottawa to deal with the problems of the West. But as winter came on, Riel began to talk wildly, to hold meetings in secret, and to flout the authority of the priests with whom he had at first been in close harmony. At the same time he threw out hints, which did not reach those in authority, that if the government would again pay him a sum to leave the country, say \$100,000, or \$35,000

or perhaps only \$10,000 the half-breed question could be settled: "I am the half-breed question."

The government was repeatedly informed of the storm that was brewing; government officials, local newspapers, missionaries, settlers, urged consideration.<sup>1</sup> But Ottawa could not be roused from its lethargy. In 1883 Blake moved for papers on the half-breeds' grievances, but none were brought down for two years; in 1884 Cameron called for a committee of investigation, but the reply was given that there was nothing to investigate. True, the time-honoured method of silencing agitation by giving office to the agitators was adopted: Louis Schmidt, secretary of the committee which had invited Riel, was made an assistant land-agent, and of the delegates, Isbester was offered and Dumas accepted a post as Indian farm instructor, while Gabriel Dumont received a ferry license; it was not surprising that Riel thought his silence worth at least ten thousand. In January, 1885, further, authority was taken to appoint a commission to enumer-

<sup>1</sup> Charles Mair of Prince Albert, an Ontario pioneer who had been a vigorous supporter of the Canada party in Red River in 1869, made four pilgrimages to Ottawa to seek to rouse the government to action. Failing, in April, 1884, to receive a hearing, he returned to Prince Albert and brought his family back to Ontario to escape the threatened rising; a final appeal in December was equally futile. Of the April attempt Lieut.-Col. George T. Denison has written: "When he returned to Toronto from Ottawa he told me positively that there would be a rebellion, that the officials were absolutely indifferent and immovable, and I could not help laughing at the picture he gave me of Sir David Macpherson, a very large, handsome, erect man of six feet four inches, getting up, leaving his room, and walking away down the corridor, while Mair, a short stout man, had almost to run alongside of him, as he made his final appeal to preserve the peace and prevent bloodshed."—"Soldiering in Canada," p. 263.

ate the half-breeds, but the government still insisted that the claim to the same treatment accorded the Manitoba half-breeds could not be conceded; in February approval was telegraphed of a report on half-breed claims at St. Laurent, made months before. Steps were taken to strengthen the North-West Mounted Police and to ascertain the possibility of carrying troops from eastern Canada over the uncompleted Canadian Pacific tracks in case of an outbreak, but to take effective and comprehensive action to avert the outbreak was beyond Ottawa's capacity or its will. On the very day that Duck Lake was fought, Macdonald reiterated his opposition to the Métis demand for scrip. Ten days later the policy was reversed, and instructions were given to issue the scrip so long denied. But a concession at that late date could only condemn the previous refusal; it could not avert the consequences.

In March, 1885, the storm broke. Irritated by the government's continued neglect and roused to action by Riel's hypnotic eloquence, the half-breeds of St. Laurent drifted into rebellion. A rumour spread by Lawrence Clark, a former Hudson's Bay Chief Factor, of the approach of a force of police to arrest Riel and his followers made the hesitating throw in their lot with the reckless. A provisional government was established with Riel as president and Gabriel Dumont as military chief. The rebels seized stores and occupied the government post at Duck Lake; a party of police and volunteers sent out under Major Crozier to protect the post encountered a half-breed force and in the fight

that followed, in which the police seem to have fired the first shot, twelve of Crozier's men, including a nephew of Edward Blake, were killed and the rest forced to retreat. The news of the Duck Lake disaster called all Canada to arms. Two thousand troops were raised in the West, and over three thousand, including small artillery units from the permanent corps, were rushed from the East, the gaps in the Canadian Pacific being covered by marching or in sleighs along rough tote-roads.

There were three centres of disturbance: Batoche, on the South Saskatchewan, where five hundred half-breeds rallied round Riel and Dumont; Battleford, on the North Saskatchewan, where an Indian chief, Poundmaker, responded to the Métis call, and the Fort Pitt country, on the same river, between Edmonton and Battleford, where another chief, Big Bear, was gathering his braves. The total number of half-breeds and Indians in the field never greatly exceeded a thousand, but there were tens of thousands of Indians on the plains with whom fighting was a deep-rooted habit, and Métis settlements along the river in more or less sympathy with their brothers of St. Laurent. The Canadian Pacific ran parallel to these centres and about two hundred miles south. From this railway base, three columns were thrown north. Their rapid advance prevented the insurrection from becoming general, but it was no easy task to suppress the forces already in the field. Dumont, practised in buffalo-hunting, a born leader of men, with an excellent eye for country, was

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fully a match for his antagonists in capacity, but numbers, artillery, and the dash and courage of the Canadian volunteers broke down all resistance. After an indecisive engagement at Fish Creek in April, Batoche was carried by storm on May 12. Further west, Battleford and Edmonton had been relieved, but isolated settlers had been forced to flee in terror or had been taken captive by looting Indian bands; at Frog Lake, near Fort Pitt, five men, including two Catholic priests, had been murdered by members of Big Bear's tribe. After the fall of Batoche, the Indian movement collapsed, and by June all was quiet again on the Saskatchewan.

Riel was the prophet rather than the captain of the movement. His assurance drove the Métis into action, but once the conflict had begun, Dumont took the lead. Charges of personal cowardice were in fact made against Riel later, but were disproved by the burden of the evidence. He was a man of deeply religious instincts, and in the first weeks of his visit he had been on good terms with the Catholic missionaries in the North, one of whom, Father André, had been instrumental in securing his return from Montana. But during the winter their suspicion of his revolutionary bias and his growing heterodoxy brought a cooling, and the priests, meeting in council, agreed that he could not be allowed to continue his religious duties. Once the die was cast, Riel devoted himself as much to building up a new church suited to the Métis needs as to defending the new state. He induced the great majority of his fol-

lowers to renounce allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church—“*La vieille romaine est cassée, le pape est tombé,*”—danced and shouted on the altar steps in the church of Saint Antoine, proclaimed himself a prophet sent to achieve a reformation long overdue, and denied the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the real presence; how could Jesus, who was six and a half feet tall, be in a little wafer? His council or exovidat—he insisted that they were merely “of the flock,” assuming no authority but voicing the people’s will—took their ecclesiastical duties seriously. Alternating with resolutions as to the disposition and duties of their little force, motions to assign a gun to Pierre, a horse to Maxime, or a cow to Napoleon, or decisions to send a scout to Qu’Appelle or letters to a Cree chief, the papers of the council reveal many decisions on religious matters. Now it is merely a resolution to take a church to serve as school or an exhortation to Father Vegreville or to Father Fourmond to hold himself neutral; now it is a declaration that “the Exovidat of the French-Canadian Métis believes firmly that hell will not last forever, that the doctrine of everlasting future punishment is contrary to Divine Mercy as well as to the charity of our Saviour Jesus Christ,” or a resolution “that the Lord’s Day be put back to the seventh day of the week,”—carried with nine ayes and three nays. Riel had the honour, unique since time began, of being proclaimed prophet by order in council: “Moved by M. Boucher, seconded by M. Tourond, That the Canadian half-breed Exovidat acknowledges Louis ‘David’ Riel as a prophet



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in the service of Jesus Christ . . . as a prophet, the humble imitator in many things of St. John the Baptist,"—carried by nine ayes, M. Ouellette not voting. Or again, after a controversy with Father Vegreville, it is moved "that if God so wills, if He has so decided in His eternal designs, we desire nothing better than to be His priests and to constitute, if such is His desire and His holy will, the new religious ministry of Jesus Christ; and we at once establish the living Catholic Apostolic and vital church of the new world." A fragment from the minutes of March 25 records that it was "proposed by M. Boucher, seconded by M. Pierre Henry, that the Commandments of God be the laws of the provisional government, that we recognize the right of Mr. Louis 'David' Riel to direct the priests; that the Archbishop Ignace Bourget be recognized from this day as the Pope of the new world, and the members of the Council . . ." As became a prophet, Riel saw visions and heard voices, and each morning recounted what he had seen and heard. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Riel's diary presents an extraordinary jumble of acuteness and of rambling nonsense: ". . . The Spirit of God said to me, 'The enemy has gone to Prince Albert.' I prayed saying, 'Deign to make me know who is that enemy.' He answered, 'Charlie Larence.' The Spirit of God has shown me the place where I should be wounded, the highest joint of the ring finger. He pointed out to me which joint it was on his own finger. . . ." "Do you know some one called Charlie Larence? He wants to drink five gallons in the name of the movement. The Spirit of God has made me understand that we must bind the prisoners. I have seen Gabriel Dumont; he was afflicted, ashamed; he did not look at me, he looked at his empty table. But Gabriel Dumont is blessed, his faith will not totter. He is fired by the grace of God. . . . My ideas are just, well weighed, well defined; mourning is not in my thoughts. My ideas are level with my gun; my gun is standing. It is the invisible power of God which keeps my gun erect. Oh, my God, give me grace to establish the day of your rest, to bring back in honour the Sabbath day as it was fixed by the Holy Spirit

After the storming of Batoche, Dumont made good his escape to the United States. To Riel General Middleton sent a message stating that he was ready to receive him and his council and to protect him until their case had been decided upon by the government; three days after the fight, scouts came upon Riel, who surrendered.

The rapid collapse of the insurrection brought a surge of relief over all Canada, apprehensive, with the memory of Custer and Sitting Bull still fresh, of the horrors of an Indian rising. With relief there came, particularly from Ontario, a stern demand for the punishment of the guilty leaders. Riel was brought to trial at Regina before a stipendiary magistrate and an English-speaking jury of six men. The Crown was represented by Christopher Robinson, B. B. Osler, R. W. Burbidge, D. L. Scott, and T. C. Casgrain; and the prisoner by F. X. Lemieux, Charles Fitzpatrick, J. N. Greenshields, and T. C. Johnston. The Crown urged Riel's responsibility for the outbreak and the loss of life that had followed, his attempt to incite the Indians to war, his offers to sell out his comrades. Counsel for Riel took exception to the jurisdiction of the court, demanded, in vain, opportunity to consult the papers of Riel seized at Batoche, and rested their case mainly on the plea of insanity,—a plea

in the person of Moses, your servant." . . . "While I was praying, the Spirit of God showed me, in the south branch, a small vessel in which there were two or three men, one of whom had a red tongue. . . . I have seen the giant. He comes. He is hideous. He is Goliath. . . . He loses his own body and all his people. There is left to him nothing but the head. He is not willing to humble himself. He has his head cut off."

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which Riel vigorously repudiated in his own address to the jury. The jury brought in a verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy; the magistrate sentenced Riel to be hanged on September 18. The Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba confirmed the jurisdiction of the court, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, on petition, declined leave to appeal. After the cabinet had come to its decision to let the sentence stand, a commission of three doctors, all in the government's employ and none specialists in mental diseases, was sent to investigate Riel's sanity; they reported in substance that he was subject to delusions on political and religious subjects, but that they considered him responsible for his actions. After three reprieves, Riel, who had recanted his religious heresies and faced his end with calm courage, was hanged in the yard of the mounted-police barracks, November 16. Eighteen of his half-breed followers were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of from one to seven years, while later in November eight of the Indians convicted of the murders at Frog Lake and elsewhere, Wandering Spirit, Little Bear, Iron Body, Ikta, Bad Arrow, Round the Sky, Man without Blood and Miserable Man, paid the penalty on the gallows.

Riel was dead, but for many a month his ghost walked the stage of Canadian politics. Ontario had called for punishment, Quebec for pardon, and passion mounted on both sides until it threatened to break Confederation into fragments.

Parliament was early called upon to face the issue.

While the rebellion was in progress, there was unanimous backing of the government in its suppression. Once it had collapsed and Riel lay in the Regina gaol, Blake, in the beginning of July, moved a vote of censure on the government for the "grave neglect, delay, and mismanagement" which had marked its handling of North-West affairs. In a long and powerful speech, Blake analyzed and marshalled the evidence gleaned from the papers which had tardily been submitted to the House, and framed an overwhelming indictment against the administration. Macdonald replied. He accused Blake of preparing a brief for Riel, denied that the grievances of the Métis were serious, charged the Opposition with neglect in the years between 1873 and 1878, and laid the blame on white speculators in Prince Albert. He did not even yet believe that the grant of scrip was just or expedient; he had yielded for the sake of peace: "Well, for God's sake let them have the scrip; they will either drink it or waste it or sell it, but let us have peace."

Laurier rose to second Blake's resolution of censure. He dealt first with Macdonald's contention that the insurgents had no grievances but were simply the dupes of Riel. In a passage characteristic of his measured eloquence and of his habit of illuminating the present by light from the past, he declared:

I can illustrate what I am now saying, that no man, however powerful, can exercise such influence as is attributed to Louis Riel, by a page from our own history. Few men have there been anywhere who have wielded greater sway over their

fellow-countrymen than did Mr. Papineau at a certain time in the history of Lower Canada, and no man ever lived who had been more profusely endowed by nature to be the idol of a nation. A man of commanding presence, of majestic countenance, of impassioned eloquence, of unblemished character, of pure, disinterested patriotism, for years and years he held over the hearts of his fellow-countrymen almost unbounded sway, and, even to this day, the mention of his name will arouse throughout the length and breadth of Lower Canada a thrill of enthusiasm in the breasts of all, men or women, old or young. What was the secret of that great power he held at one time? Was it simply his eloquence, his commanding intellect, or even his pure patriotism? No doubt, they all contributed; but the main cause of his authority over his fellow-countrymen was this, that, at that time, his fellow-countrymen were an oppressed race, and he was the champion of their cause. But when the day of relief came, the influence of Mr. Papineau, however great it might have been and however great it still remained, ceased to be paramount. When eventually the Union Act was carried, Papineau violently assaulted it, showed all its defects, deficiencies and dangers, and yet he could not raise his followers and the people to agitate for the repeal of that act. What was the reason? The conditions were no more the same. Imperfect as was the Union Act, it still gave a measure of freedom and justice to the people, and men who at the mere sound of Mr. Papineau's voice would have gladly courted death on battle-field or scaffold, then stood silent and unresponsive, though he asked them nothing more than a constitutional agitation for a repeal of the Union Act. Conditions were no more the same; tyranny and oppression had made rebels of the people of Lower Canada, while justice and freedom made them true and loyal subjects, which they have been ever since. And now to tell us that Louis Riel, simply by his influence, could bring these men from peace to war; to tell us that they had no grievances; to tell us that they were brought into a state of rebellion either through pure malice or through imbecile adherence to an ad-

venturer, is an insult to the intelligence of the people at large and an unjust aspersion on the people of the Saskatchewan. The honourable gentleman tells us that the people of the Saskatchewan River have no wrongs; this is but a continuation of the system which has been followed all along with regard to this people. They have been denied their just rights, and now they are slandered by the same men whose unjust course towards them drove them to the unfortunate proceedings they have adopted since. This I do charge upon the government; that they have for years and years ignored the just claims of the half-breeds of the Saskatchewan, that for years and years these people have been petitioning the government and always in vain. I say they have been treated by this government with an indifference amounting to undisguised contempt, that they have been goaded into the unfortunate course they have adopted, and if this rebellion be a crime, I say the responsibility for that crime weighs as much upon the men who, by their conduct, have caused the rebellion, as upon those who engaged in it.

The government, he continued, was doubly open to censure, since the troubles of 1869 had given it warning of the danger of neglect. If now millions of dollars had been expended and some of the most precious blood of Canada shed, the reason was the ostrich policy of the government in denying the existence of grievances. In consenting after the rebellion had broken out to grant the half-breeds their scrip, the government had condemned itself. Petitions, assemblies, delegations, even the sending for Riel, had not stirred the government out of its lethargy, but the bullets of Duck Lake had brought at once what six years of prayers could not bring: "Justice loses most of its value when it is tardily and grudgingly conceded.

Even last night the honourable gentleman would not say that in so doing . . . he recognized their rights; he simply said that he would do it and did it for the sake of peace. For the sake of peace, when we were in the midst of war! for the sake of peace, when insurgents were in the field and blood had been shed!" The government was seeking to shelter itself behind the anger against Riel. It would not do to rouse prejudices in this matter: there were prejudices in this country of many kinds:

We are not yet so built up a nation as to forget our respective origins, and I say frankly that the people of my own province, who have a community of origin with the insurgents, sympathize with them, just as the sympathies of the people of Ontario who are of a different origin would go altogether in the other direction. I am of French origin, and I confess that if I were to act only from the blood that runs in my veins, it would carry me strongly in favour of these people, but above all I claim to be in favour of what is just and right and fair. . . . Let justice be done and let the consequences fall upon the guilty ones, whether on the head of Louis Riel or on the shoulders of the government. . . . There is in connection with this matter another point which I have not heard referred to, but which seems to be in the minds of a good many people. It is not expressed, but I think the feeling permeates the very atmosphere, not only of this House, but of the whole of this country. I have not heard it stated, but it is in the minds of many that if these men have rebelled, it is because they are, to a certain extent, of French origin. The First Minister stated yesterday that Gabriel Dumont and his friends are and always were rebels. It is not to my knowledge that Dumont or any one of those who took up arms on the Saskatchewan any more than on the Red River ever had the thought of rebelling against the authority of Her

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Majesty. It was not against Her Majesty the Queen; they rebelled against the tyranny of the Canadian government. . . . This I say, and I say it coming from a province where less than fifty years ago every man of the race to which I belong was a rebel and where to-day every man of that race is a true and loyal subject, as true and loyal as any that breathes—I say give them justice, give them freedom, give them their rights, treat them as for the last forty years you have treated the people of Lower Canada, and by and by throughout those territories you will have contentment, peace and harmony, where to-day discord, hatred and war are ruining the land.

The resolution of censure was defeated on a party vote, but that did not check the storm of discussion beyond the walls of parliament. After the trial and condemnation of Riel, the question shifted from the responsibility of the government to the advisability of pardon for the rebel leader. It was a question that stirred sectional and party animosity to the depths, though there was by no means a united or a consistent voice in either section or either party.

From Ontario the first insistent cry had been for punishment. Riel was twice guilty of the black crime of treason. He had attempted to bring on the horrors of an Indian rising. He had occasioned the death of scores of Canadian men and women. No plea could lessen the enormity of that offence. The grievances of the Métis could not excuse rebellion. And in the minds of many, more serious even than the lives lost in battle was the unforgivable, cold-blooded murder of Thomas Scott. Yet as the summer passed, the voice of clemency began to be heard, distorted though it was



by partisan manœuvring. The Toronto "Mail," the leading government organ in Ontario, which admitted after Blake's July speech that the government had been guilty of "gross and inexcusable negligence," admitted to its columns forceful pleas for pardon on the ground of national policy and of Riel's insanity; editorially, it prepared opinion for either decision on the cabinet's part. The Toronto "Globe" while insisting that the government was equally guilty, had at first joined in the demand for punishment. "No one who has read the evidence," it declared in August, "can doubt that Riel richly deserves death." But as the weeks went on, the cooling of passion and the fuller recognition of extenuating circumstances brought a growing leaning toward amnesty, even if the old Adam of partisanship could not resist the temptation at times to interpret the assumed leaning of the government in the same direction as a weak concession to the French Bleus who were holding the pistol to Sir John's ear. Only in the Loyal Orange lodges was there no weakening; one brother served notice that "if the government allows Rome to step in and reprieve this arch-traitor, the Conservative party can no longer count on our services," and the "Orange Sentinel" in October insisted that "the blood of Thomas Scott yet cries aloud for justice."

In Quebec, while the rebellion had been denounced, there was deep sympathy with the Métis claims, and a growing sympathy with the rebel leader. Public subscriptions provided for Riel's defence at the trial, and

after the sentence, press and platform demands for his pardon grew more insistent. The government was at least as guilty as Riel; his insanity was notorious, genuine; no civilized people now put to death the leader of an unsuccessful revolt. And in any case, sane or insane, right or wrong, Riel and the people he had championed were kinsmen, children of the Quebec that had sent its daring pioneers to the prairies and the rivers of the West long years before. It was in vain that every priest on the Saskatchewan wrote publicly and privately denouncing Riel as the arch-enemy of the Church, anti-Christ, the hand behind the massacre of Father Marchand and Father Fafard at Frog Lake. It was in vain that the extravagant laudation of Riel was attacked as a slur on the real heroes of French Canada, daring leaders like Cartier and Champlain, Maisonneuve and Dollard, Montcalm and Lévis, de Salaberry and Chénier, sainted apostles like Laval and Brébeuf, Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Jeanne Mance. The movement grew. There was much that was deplorable in the Quebec as in the Ontario agitation, much of ignorance and fanaticism and blind racial jealousy, much pandering by politicians to local passion, but just as the Ontario demand had as one of its main roots a growing national sense, a lofty determination to make Canada one and make it strong, so the Quebec campaign had its nobler side, its sympathy with the poor and dispossessed, its readiness to respond to the cry of kinsmen in distress. Riel's grave faults were no more to the point than the dis-

torted limbs or wayward habits of a son in the eyes of his mother.

So vital a movement could not but raise questions of party attitude. Rouge newspapers like "La Patrie" joined with Castor journals like "L'Etendard" to threaten the government with vengeance if it sacrificed Riel to Orange hatred. But it was not merely from the Opposition that these demands came. The controversy gave a new angle and a new channel to the jealousy and rivalry which marked the relations of the federal Bleu leaders. Between elections, Langevin, a supple and experienced tactician, though not a man of force, Chapleau, the most moving platform orator of his day, save perhaps the more tempestuous Mercier, and Caron, a skilful manager of election campaigns, fought a bitter and unrelenting triangular contest for leadership of the Quebec contingent in the Conservative party. The fact that Chapleau and his chief newspaper supporter, "La Minerve," condemned Riel, was another reason why Langevin and his organ, "Le Monde," should demand pardon. Langevin gave his friends to understand that either through executive pardon or a medical finding of insanity, Riel would escape the gallows, and "Le Monde" outshouted its contemporaries in praise of Riel and anathemas upon his opponents. Even "La Minerve" was forced to shift its position and, while contending that petitions, not criticisms, should be directed to the government, promised that the Bleus would do more for Riel than his Rouge champions.

The government itself therefore contributed largely

to the agitation in Quebec and to the belief that Riel would never be executed. When at last after much balancing of opinion—balancing of votes, its critics charged—the majority in the cabinet decided that Riel must swing, the news was received in Quebec, first with incredulity, then with the stupor of a national calamity, and then with a universal cry of anger that shook not merely the government but the nation to its foundations. The strength of the feeling that pervaded the whole province that fateful November may be gauged from an editorial the day after the hanging, from the staunchest defender of the government in the province, a journal which for months had derided Riel's claim to sympathy, "La Minerve":

Why is it that Riel, the fugitive rebel of 1870, the inmate of the asylums of Saint-Jean and Beauport, the author of the late rebellion, the insulter of the bishops and priests of his church, the instigator of the Indian rising and the man responsible for the massacre of Frog Lake, the wretched rebel hiding among the women and children while his men were giving themselves up to death at Batoche, why is it that this traitor, this apostate, this madman, for that and nothing but that is what Riel has been, holds so great a place in the public mind? . . . What is the mysterious force which creates this movement, which lets loose the tempest that threatens to overturn in its course reputations, prestige, power? It is a thing at once petty and great, fickle and determined, tender and cruel. It is the wounding of the national self-esteem. Riel will leave no trace in the memories of men by the work he has done, the ideas he has given forth, the doctrines he has preached, and yet his name marks a deep furrow in the political soil of our young country. The reason is that the hand that placed the gallows rope about his neck wounded

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a whole people. It is because the cry of justice, calling for his death in the name of the law, has been drowned by the cry of fanaticism calling for revenge. That is why the death of this criminal takes on the proportions of a national calamity.

To every man in public life, and not least to Wilfrid Laurier, the crisis brought a challenge. He was not a man easily stirred by popular cries. His instincts were all on the side of order and constitutional procedure. He desired, as few men of the day desired, the close union of the two races of Canada. Yet in the Canada of that day, Canadianism pure and unhyphenated was still an aspiration, and if the practical alternative was merely to be English-Canadian, Laurier would prefer to be French-Canadian. He had little sympathy with Riel, much with the Métis whose cause Riel had championed so blunderingly. His anger burned deep against the government's bungling and neglect, and the ill-concealed scorn for all that was French-Canadian which marked the noisier elements in Ontario awoke resentment even in his balanced mind. When the unbelievable news came that the government had let Riel go to the scaffold, it seemed to him for a brief moment that the hopes of his youth were doomed to disappointment, that racial harmony was a mirage, and that nothing remained but for each section to make itself strong and independent.

Quebec's anger found expression in countless meetings of protest, in editorials and pamphlets and petitions, but the most striking manifestation was the great meeting held in Montreal, in the Champ de

Mars, on the Sunday following the hanging. Never in Montreal's history had there been a gathering to compare to it. Forty thousand people crowded about the three platforms which had been erected, and cheered every one of the thirty speakers to the echo. Party lines seemed to have disappeared; Mercier and Desjardins, Robidoux and Beaubien, Turcotte and Trudel, Beausoleil and Bergeron, Poirier and Tarte, Rouge and Bleu, voiced the indignation of a united people. Laurier spoke with the rest. Henceforth there would be in Quebec neither Liberals nor Conservatives; the government's callous policy had broken down party lines. The half-breeds had been the victims of extortion and neglect and contempt, they had been driven to revolt. "Had I been born on the banks of the Saskatchewan," he was reported as declaring in a sentence that for ten years every Tory editor in Canada kept standing in type, "I would myself have shouldered a musket to fight against the neglect of governments and the shameless greed of speculators."

Throughout the winter the agitation flamed. Many wild and foolish words were spoken, Riel was painted a hero, a martyr, a saint, and the members of the government, particularly the Bleu leaders, hanged in effigy. The Quebec Liberals joined forces with the dissentient Conservatives, including a number of Castors; many of them had previously been ready to come to terms with the Chapleau wing of the Bleus, and even to accept Chapleau as leader, but Chapleau had declined the advances, and carried on a courageous

fight against the government's critics. He did not fight alone. The English Liberals of Quebec discountenanced the agitation; Henri Joly and W. J. Watts resigned their seats in the local house in witness of their disapproval. The dignitaries of the Church threw all their weight into the same scale. Mgr. Fabre, Mgr. Gravel, Mgr. Moreau, Mgr. Langevin, and Mgr. Cameron in Nova Scotia, issued mandements pointing out the sin of revolution, denouncing disrespect to constituted authority, warning against the danger of irreverence and anarchy, and reminding their flocks that after all it was to the bishops, not to the journalists, that the Holy Spirit had confided the task of guiding the Church and its members.

Laurier shouldered no more muskets. He remained firm in his indignation against the government's laxness before the rebellion and its sternness after, but he had no sympathy with those who heaped personal abuse on every *pendard* and exalted Riel to a martyr's seat. He could not support the policy to which the provincial Liberal leaders were committed, of attempting to form a Parti National, a union of all French-Canadians, for he had long ago realized and pointed out to his compatriots the folly of such isolation.<sup>1</sup> He took no more part in public demonstrations, but prepared to take the government to task in the House.

<sup>1</sup> "The Huntington 'Gleaner," the chief mouthpiece of the Protestant Liberals of the Eastern Townships, while not surprised at Mercier's action, declared that Laurier's Champ de Mars speech contradicted all that had been known of his policy and attitude.

Quebec's outburst had been followed by a still more extraordinary if more limited crusade in Ontario. Fearing that the government had lost Quebec, and seeking to restore the balance by creating a solid Ontario, Conservative organs, and particularly the "Mail," broke into furious attacks upon "French-Canadian domination," which made "L'Etendard" seem a moderate and reasonable sheet, and far outdistanced George Brown at his worst. Quebec had demanded that no criminal must be punished if French blood ran in his veins; it sought to impose its arrogant will on all Canada. The answer must be plain. "Let us solemnly assure them again," declared the "Mail" on November 23, "that rather than submit to such a yoke, Ontario would smash Confederation into its original fragments, preferring that the dream of a united Canada should be shattered forever." And again, two days later: "As Britons we believe the conquest will have to be fought over again. Lower Canada may depend upon it there will be no treaty of 1763. The victors will not capitulate next time. . . . But the French-Canadian people will lose everything. The wreck of their fortunes and their happiness would be swift, complete and irremediable." And the "Orange Sentinel": "Must it be said that the rights and liberties of the English people in this English colony depend upon a foreign race? . . . The day is near when an appeal to arms will be heard in all parts of Canada. Then certainly our soldiers, benefiting by the lessons of the past, will have to complete in



this country the work they began in the North-West."

Ontario Liberals were divided. The majority, both of the leaders and of the rank and file, believed the execution was justified, but a large minority attacked it. Partisanship played as obvious a part in their manœuvring as in the backing and filling of the ministers and their supporters; some of the Liberal newspapers which condemned the government for hanging Riel would have condemned it as strongly for pardoning him. A Conservative speaker, J. C. Rykert, amused himself by collecting specimens of inconsistency and sharp curves; the classic instance was that of the Port Hope "Guide" which before the execution declared, "It has come to a pretty pass indeed when a red-handed rebel can thus snap his fingers at the law," and after, "It has come to a pretty pass indeed that in the noon-tide glare of the nineteenth century political offenders must suffer death if they dare to assert their just rights." Yet there was more in the protest than partisan manœuvring. For months before the hanging opinion had been turning steadily toward clemency, toward a clearer recognition not only of the government's complicity but of Riel's irresponsibility. Until the last moment it was not believed that the sentence would be enforced. The revelation of the effect upon Quebec completed the proof of the national inexpediency of the government's decision.

Blake had been absent in England from the end of August until the end of December. His attitude was awaited with keen interest. In his first public address

in London, Ontario, in January, he declared that he did not desire a party conflict over the Regina tragedy:

I do not propose to construct a party platform out of the Regina scaffold. . . . I believe we cannot, if we would, make of this a party question. After full reflection, I do not entertain that desire, but were it otherwise, I doubt that the result could be accomplished. . . . I entertain the impression that with us as with the Tories there are differences of opinion in the ranks not likely to be composed, and which I at any rate shall make no endeavour to control to a party end.

While going on to rebuke some of the extreme outbursts from Quebec, and remaining of the opinion that the execution of Riel neither should nor could be made a strictly party question, Blake was none the less determined to express his individual views and to arraign the government in the measured and serious words the crisis demanded. He was, in fact, prepared to go further than his Quebec lieutenant. In a consultation in Ottawa shortly after the London speech, Laurier urged that, as before, the guilt of the government, not the punishment of Riel, should be the question to keep in the foreground, but Blake was prepared, if need be, to change the emphasis.

The House opened the end of February. Realizing that a debate was inevitable, the government manoeuvred to secure the most favourable fighting ground. One of its Quebec supporters, Philippe Landry of Montmagny, who had condemned the execution, undertook to move a resolution "that this House feels it its duty to express its deep regret that the sentence of death passed upon Louis Riel, convicted of

high treason, was allowed to be carried into execution." The moment his speech, condemning the government in moderate phrases, was concluded, Langevin took the floor, and after a very brief and formal defence, declared that "in order that there may be no misunderstanding, no false issues or side issues, and that we may have a direct vote," he would move the previous question. This prevented the offering of any further amendment, and compelled the Liberals to debate and vote upon the question of Riel's punishment, on which they were divided, rather than to offer an amendment, on which they would have united, condemning the government for its whole North-West policy. It was an adroit manœuvre, and though M. Landry denied collusion, his protests carried little credence.

The debate was long and bitter. Macdonald did not speak, nor any of the Ontario Liberals who opposed the motion, but every angle of opinion was abundantly presented. A second government follower, Colonel Amyot, supported Landry; Royal of Provencher, Riel's former friend, insisted that the Liberals were worse than the government. Malcolm Cameron condemned the "corrupt, incompetent, and imbecile" ministry for casting dice over the body of Riel and finally yielding to Orange pressure. Curran defended with *tu quoques*, Rykert produced his scrap-book, François Langelier reviewed Langevin's devious policy, and Pierre Béchard, an old Rouge of moderate but firm convictions, reviewed the policy adopted elsewhere toward unsuccessful rebellion.

It was late on the night of March 16 when M. Béchard concluded. The government put no one up to answer him. The Speaker began to ask whether the question should be put, when Laurier rose. The empty house filled quickly. For two hours it listened, breathless; at more than one tense moment, not a sound was heard but the speaker's ringing voice and the ticking of the clock.

Laurier wasted no words. At the outset he accused the government of judicial murder. In his province the execution had been universally condemned, as the sacrifice of a life not to inexorable justice but to bitter passion and revenge. He denounced as a vile calumny the "Mail's" contention that French-Canadians opposed the punishment of any criminal of French blood. The press of the whole world had condemned that act. Doubtless kinship added keenness to conviction: "I cheerfully admit and I will plead guilty to that weakness, if weakness it be, that if an injustice be committed against a fellow-being, the blow will fall deeper into my heart if it should fall upon one of my kith and kin." He denied absolutely any sympathy with the suicidal policy of forming a purely French-Canadian party. In concise and lucid review he indicted the government for its years of neglect, not to be atoned for by eleventh-hour repentance: "At last justice was coming to them. In ten days, from the twenty-sixth of March to the sixth of April, the government had altered their policy and had given what they had refused for years. What

was the cause? The bullets of Duck Lake, the rebellion in the North-West. . . .”

I appeal now to any friend of liberty in this House; I appeal not only to the Liberals who sit beside me, but to any man who has a British heart in his breast, and I ask, when subjects of Her Majesty have been petitioning for years for their rights, and these rights have not only been ignored, but have been denied, and when these men take their lives in their hands and rebel, will any one in this House say that these men, when they got their rights, should not have saved their heads as well, and that the criminals, if criminals there were in this rebellion, are not those who fought and bled and died, but the men who sit on these Treasury benches? Sir, rebellion is always an evil, it is always an offence against the positive law of a nation; it is not always a moral crime. The Minister of Militia in the week that preceded the execution of Riel declared: “I hate all rebels; I have no sympathy, good, bad or indifferent, with rebellion.” Sir, what is hateful . . . is not rebellion but the despotism which induces that rebellion; what is hateful are not rebels but the men, who, having the enjoyment of power, do not discharge the duties of power; they are the men who, having the power to redress wrongs, refuse to listen to the petitions that are sent to them; they are the men who, when they are asked for a loaf, give a stone. . . . Though, Mr. Speaker; these men were in the wrong; though the rebellion had to be put down; though it was the duty of the Canadian government to assert its authority and vindicate the law, still, I ask any friend of liberty, is there not a feeling rising in his heart, stronger than all reasoning to the contrary, that those men were excusable?

Such were, Mr. Speaker, my sentiments. I spoke them elsewhere. I have had, since that time, occasion to realize that I have greatly shocked Tory editors and Tory members. Sir, I know what Tory loyalty is. Tories have always been famous for being loyal so long as it was profitable to be so. . . .

Sir, I will not receive any lectures on loyalty from men with such a record. I am a British subject, and I value the proud title as much as any one in this House. But if it is expected of me that I shall allow fellow-countrymen, unfriended, undefended, unprotected, and unrepresented in this House, to be trampled under foot by this government, I say that is not what I understand by loyalty, I would call that slavery. . . .

Sir, I am not of those who look upon Louis Riel as a hero. Nature had endowed him with many brilliant qualities, but nature denied him that supreme quality without which all other qualities, however brilliant, are of no avail. Nature denied him a well-balanced mind. At his worst he was a subject fit for an asylum; at his best he was a religious and political 'monomaniac. But he was not a bad man—I do not believe at least that he was the bad man he has been represented to be in a certain press. But that he was insane appears to me beyond the possibility of controversy. When the reports first came here last spring and in the early summer of his doings and sayings in the North-West, when we heard that he was to depose the Pope and establish an American Pope, those who did not know him believed he was an impostor, but those who knew him knew at once what was the matter. In the province of Quebec there was not an instant's hesitation about it. Almost every man in that province knew that he had been several times confined in asylums, and therefore it was manifest to the people of Quebec that he had fallen into one of those misfortunes with which he was afflicted. When his counsel were engaged and commenced to prepare his trial, they saw at once that if justice to him and only justice was to be done, their plea should be a plea of insanity.

Laurier went on to impugn the fairness of the trial: the request of Riel's counsel for delay, for witnesses, were granted only in part; the requests for Riel's papers were refused. The medical commission sent to Regina was a shameful sham. Riel's secretary,

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William Jackson, was acquitted as insane; why, the people of Lower Canada demanded, was a different measure meted out to the man of French blood? "Jackson is free to-day, Riel is in his grave."

Then followed a reference to old wounds:

The death of Scott is the cause of the death of Riel to-day. Why, if the honourable gentleman thinks that the death of Scott was a crime, did he not punish Riel at the time? 1870, '71, '72, '73, almost four years passed away, and yet the government, knowing such a crime as it has been represented here had been committed, never took any step to have the crime punished. What was their reason? The reason was that the government had promised to condone the offence; the reason was that the government was not willing to let that man come to trial but on the contrary actually supplied him with money to induce him to leave the country. Sir, I ask any man on the other side of the House, if this offence was punishable then, why was it not punished then, and if it was not punishable then, why is it punished now? . . . This issue of the death of Thomas Scott has long been buried, and now it is raised by whom? It is raised by members opposite,—the last men who should ever speak of it. Sir, we are a new nation, we are attempting to unite the different conflicting elements which we have into a nation. Shall we ever succeed if the bond of union is to be revenge?

The example of the United States after the Civil War should have been followed. Time had proved that General Grant, who stood for pardon, was a "truer patriot, a truer statesman than Andrew Johnston, who urged a trial for treason."

You see the result to-day. Scarcely twenty years have passed away since that rebellion, the most terrible that ever

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shook a civilized nation, was put down, and because of the merciful course adopted by the victors, the two sections of that country are now more closely united than ever before. . . . But our government say they were desirous of giving a lesson. . . . Had they taken as much pains to do right as they have taken to punish wrong, they would never have had any occasion to convince those people that the law cannot be violated with impunity, because the law would never have been violated at all.

Then came the conclusion:

But to-day, not to speak of those who have lost their lives, our prisons are full of men who, despairing ever to get justice by peace, sought to obtain it by war, who, despairing of ever being treated like freemen, took their lives in their hands, rather than be treated as slaves. They have suffered a great deal, they are suffering still; yet their sacrifices will not be without reward. Their leader is in the grave, they are in durance, but from their prisons they can see that that justice, that liberty which they sought in vain, and for which they fought not in vain, has at last dawned upon their country. Their fate well illustrates the truth of Byron's invocation to liberty, in the introduction to the Prisoner of Chillon:

Eternal Spirit of the chainless mind!  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty thou art!  
For there thy habitation is the heart—  
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;  
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—  
To fetters and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
Their country conquers with their martyrdom.

Yes, their country has conquered with their martyrdom. They are in durance to-day; but the rights for which they were fighting have been acknowledged. We have not the report of the commission yet, but we know that more than two thousand claims so long denied have been at last granted. And more—still more. We have it in the Speech from the Throne that at last representation is to be granted to those Territories. This side of the House long sought, but sought



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in vain, to obtain that measure of justice. It could not come then, but it came after the war; it came as the last conquest of that insurrection. And again I say that their country has conquered with their martyrdom, and if we look at that one fact alone there was cause sufficient, independent of all others, to extend mercy to the one who is dead and to those who live.

Never had the House heard a more moving speech. Never did Laurier's eloquence rise higher. Friend and opponent joined in rare tribute. Thomas White, who had succeeded Senator Macpherson as Minister of the Interior, referred next day to "a speech of which, although I differ from him altogether, I as a Canadian am justly proud, because I think it is a matter of common pride to us that any public man in Canada can make on the floor of parliament such a speech as we listened to last night," and Blake declared it "the crowning proof of French domination; my honourable friend, not contented with having for this long time in his own tongue borne away the palm of parliamentary eloquence, has invaded ours, and in that field has pronounced a speech which in my humble opinion, merits this compliment, because it is the truth, that it was the finest parliamentary speech ever pronounced in the Parliament of Canada since Confederation."

The debate went on. Caron dwelt on Riel's Indian negotiations and defended himself from the charge of callous participation in a Western banquet on the day Riel was expected to hang; Mills gave an admirably judicial review of the evidence manifesting Riel's insanity; Chapleau declared that Laurier had met the

criticism of his bold and fatal words in the Champ de Mars by a more audacious speech in the House, and that Blake had chivalrously but uselessly sought to support his lieutenant by sacrificing his own convictions. But the outstanding speeches after Laurier's were Blake's and Thompson's. Blake refrained from further discussion of the government's North-West policy; for five hours he piled proof upon proof of Riel's insanity and of the weight of precedent against holding men in his situation responsible for their acts.<sup>1</sup> John Thompson, who had recently left the Bench in Nova Scotia to become Minister of Justice in the Macdonald cabinet, replied in a speech which, if not so eloquent or weighty as Blake's, was powerful and reasoned and made it clear that a man of first calibre had been added to the ranks of parliament.

The government was sustained by the largest majority of the session, 146 to 52. Seventeen Quebec sup-

<sup>1</sup> In considering the failure to recognize this fact, weight must be given not merely to party and racial passion, but to the lack of knowledge prevailing forty years ago as to the nature and effects of insanity. To-day, no medical authority would question that the man who was hanged at Regina was insane: "When one considers the mass of testimony pointing to Riel's mental defect, the undoubted history of insanity from boyhood, with the recurring paroxysms of intense excitement, he wonders that there could have been the slightest discussion regarding it. . . . Riel's was simply a case of evolutional insanity, which would in the modern school no doubt be classed as one of the paranoiac forms of dementia. The first manifestations, as were to be expected, were observed when he was at a critical period of his boyhood. His early associations were of such a nature as to turn his mind to the wrongs of his people and develop the religious fanaticism so prominent at all times in his career. Persecution is invariably the accompaniment of the paranoiac delusion, and nowhere have I seen such intense cases of this form of insanity develop as on the lonely prairies of the North-West, and they have all been of the very same type as Riel's."—Dr. C. K. Clarke, Superintendent of Rockwood Asylum, in "Queen's Quarterly," April-June, 1905.

porters of the government voted against it; twenty-three Liberals, including Mackenzie, Cartwright, and Charlton from Ontario, Fisher from Quebec, and Watson from Manitoba, parted from Blake and Laurier. The smart Landry-Langevin manoeuvre had turned the issue to the hurt of the Opposition rather than of the government. Even so, Laurier always insisted that Blake could have saved the situation had he heeded the advice to put the emphasis on the government's neglect rather than on Riel's insanity.

The country did not escape so easily as the Ottawa ministry. In Ontario the "Mail's" agitation stirred old sectarian fires, and for years to come new fuel, the North-West language issue, the Jesuits' Estates Act, the Manitoba schools controversy, fed the flames. In Quebec, Honoré Mercier rode the tempest to power. In the election campaign of October, 1886, Mercier raised the same cry of provincial autonomy which Mowat in Ontario and Fielding in Nova Scotia had found of such avail, and, with less justification, appealed to the people's anger against the party that had hanged Riel.<sup>1</sup> The Ross government, after a vain attempt to reorganize under Hon. L. O. Taillon, resigned in Janu-

<sup>1</sup>In a speech in Quebec the night before assuming the premiership, Mercier declared: "When the murder of Louis Riel had been consummated, when that unfortunate and unbalanced man had been hung on the gibbet, it was assumed that the question was settled. That was a grave mistake. The French-Canadian people felt that a deep blow had been inflicted upon their nationality. . . . We took up that question because we felt that the murder of Riel was a declaration of war upon French-Canadian influence in Confederation, a violation of right and of justice. . . . We cannot expect our English speaking fellow-citizens to share our sentiments to the full, but throughout all Canada, there is not a free and honest man who is not ready to join with us in condemning the iniquities of the North-West policy."

ary, and Mercier formed a ministry, including two Nationalist-Conservatives. Throughout the Dominion sectional sentiment grew, national unity appeared a dream. The agitation for commercial union with the United States which marked the next four years was based as much on political as on commercial despair.

Laurier had repeated in the House the stand he had taken in the Champ de Mars. He was prepared to go further, to repeat in Toronto the charges he had made in Ottawa. Toronto newspapers dared him to shoulder his musket in Ontario. He determined to take up the challenge. The older Liberals attempted to dissuade him. There was, however, a vigorous Young Men's Liberal Club in Toronto which cared less for expediency. An invitation was sent him on behalf of the club to speak on the North-West rebellion on December 10, in the Horticultural Pavilion in Toronto. It was promptly accepted. The announcement was met with renewed attacks upon Laurier and dire hints of personal assault. The Young Liberals organized a body-guard, but the city showed its good sense by avoiding any unusual demonstration or interruption. After a crowded reception at the Rossin House, Laurier faced a tremendous audience at the Pavilion. His speech was not one of his great achievements. A theory, none too well founded, that an Anglo-Saxon audience preferred cold logic to moving eloquence, led him to make long citations from state documents which lessened his effectiveness. Yet he carried his audience with him throughout, and his closing appeal drove conviction

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home. A Young Liberal of those days wrote lately:

People endured the cold of a bleak December night in the topmost gallery of the pavilion, leaning in through lowered windows to hear the address to the end. The vote of thanks was moved by Edward Blake, in an address of half an hour, which many considered the most powerful public address Blake had ever given. It seemed as if the elder statesman had been put on his mettle by the triumph of his lieutenant; certainly he fully rivalled him in eloquence. It was a great night; those who went to scoff remained to cheer.

The Tory press had denounced French-Canadians as disloyal. Who were the men who made this charge? The party which for thirty long years had been kept in power by French-Canadian votes: "Yesterday, in order to retain power these men pandered to the prejudices of my fellow-countrymen in Canada. To-day, when they see that notwithstanding all that, the votes are now escaping them, they turn in another direction, and pander to what prejudices they suppose may exist in this province." The charge was false. French-Canadians had become attached to British institutions and the British connection because they had found more freedom under the flag of St. George than they could ever have had as subjects of France. True, they retained their racial individuality:

I honour and esteem English institutions, I do not regret that we are now subjects of the Queen instead of France; but may my right hand wither by my side, if the memories of my forefathers ever cease to be dear to my ears. . . . We are Canadians. Below the island of Montreal the water that comes from the north, the Ottawa, unites with the waters that come from the Western lakes, but uniting they do not

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mix. There they run parallel, separate, distinguishable, and yet are one stream, flowing within the same banks, the mighty St. Lawrence, rolling on toward the sea bearing the commerce of a nation upon its bosom,—a perfect image of our nation. We may not assimilate, we may not blend, but for all that we are the component parts of the same country. We may be French in our origin,—and I do not deny my origin, I pride myself on it,—we may be English or Scotch, or whatever it may be, but we are Canadians, one in aim and purpose . . . As Canadians we have feelings in common with each other that are not shared by our fellow-countrymen on the other side of the water. As Canadians we are affected by local and national considerations which bind us together; we look back to the land of our ancestors and feel, for all that, no less good Canadians.

In great detail Mr. Laurier proceeded to arraign the government for its North-West policy. He prefaced:

In my opinion, the guilt of the rebellion does not rest with the miserable wretches who took up arms but rests altogether with the government who provoked it. . . . I bring this charge against the government, and I will endeavour, I think I will not fail, to prove, that the half-breeds were denied for long years rights and justice, rights which were admitted as soon as they were asked by bullets; I charge against them that they have treated the half-breeds with contempt, with undisguised disdain; I charge against them that they would not listen to their prayers; I charge against them that they drove them to despair, that they drove them to the rashness, to the madness, to the crime which they afterwards committed.

“When we find a government ill-treating a poor people, simply because they are poor and ignorant,” he concluded, “I say that it behooves us to fight freely with all the means that the constitution places in our hands.”

In a series of addresses in western Ontario, in Lon-

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don, Stratford, Windsor, Laurier repeated his criticism of the government. The government press had prophesied a hostile reception; the "Mail" had printed "*Don't* put his head under the pump" editorials; at London dodgers were circulated inciting an attack upon "the traitor Laurier." But beyond a few interruptions which the speaker readily parried, no trouble developed.

Laurier had taken in Ontario the stand he had taken in Quebec, and Ontario had been convinced alike of his courage and of his moderation.

Riel was dead, but his deeds lived after him. Ontario and Quebec were once more at loggerheads, with the Maritime provinces wearying of their bickering. The old Bleu party had been shaken and Mercier exalted, Ontario Liberalism split, Blake divided from his party, Laurier's powers revealed.

## CHAPTER VII

### LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

The General Elections of 1887—Blake on the Tariff—Renewed Defeat—The Resignation of Blake—His Power of Leadership—Cartwright and Mills—Laurier Chosen Leader—Building up a Party.

**F**OR the second time since assuming the leadership of the Liberal party, Edward Blake faced his opponents in the general election of February, 1887. Five years had passed since the first encounter, years of rapidly shifting issues, of party ebb and flow. Blake had no little ground for believing that better fortune would attend the second conflict. Not least among the signs of change was the outcome of the provincial elections which, by a most unusual coincidence, had been held in every section of the Dominion in the preceding year. True, the West remained Conservative, John Norquay, the able half-breed chief of that party, returning to power in Manitoba, and William Smith, leader of a more or less Conservative group in British Columbia, retaining control of the Pacific province. But the West then counted little in numbers or prestige. The East had voted solidly Liberal. In April, William S. Fielding had swept Nova Scotia; in June, Andrew G. Blair, leading a coalition party of a predominantly Liberal tinge, carried New Brunswick by a large majority; in October, Honoré Mercier turned a



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small minority into a majority, and in December Oliver Mowat won his fourth success. The omens seemed favourable, and Blake himself had no shred of doubt as to the issue.

The government pointed with pride to the prosperity of the country—clouded, it was true, but only for the moment—and to the successful completion of the Canadian Pacific. To the business men who were building up factories under the shelter of the national-policy wall, the bogey of the blue ruin free trade would bring was once more displayed. In Ontario the Riel issue was relied upon to lose votes for the Opposition, while in Quebec the support of the bishops would keep the loss anticipated by the government within narrow bounds. In Ontario constituencies the Grits had been hived into harmlessness; the franchise lists were now in the hands of the government's friends; Macdonald was still able to rouse to fever heat the eager loyalty of his myriad of personal followers; what was there to fear?

The Opposition pictured the country hurling headlong into bankruptcy through the government's extravagance. They rang the changes on every instance of administrative corruption and political jobbery. They held the ministers to account not merely for the undoubted ebb in commercial prosperity but for the rising tide of political discontent; with Manitoba up in arms against the federal railway policy, with Nova Scotia on the verge of secession, with Ontario and Quebec at loggerheads, what had become of the heritage of good-will and reasoned hope with which the Dominion had been

endowed at its birth? In Ontario the cry of provincial rights and in Quebec the North-West issue were relied upon. And as for the personal factor, the five years that had passed had given unquestioned proof that in intellectual capacity, in statesmanlike grasp and breadth of vision, in unflagging study of every rising issue, Blake stood head and shoulders above all his contemporaries.

On one question Blake was careful to define anew his stand. He insisted that the tariff was not an issue. Even in 1882 he had made it clear that his objections were against details and not against the principle of protection. Now he declared, notably in a speech at Malvern in January, 1887, that even change in detail was less feasible, since the enormous increase in debt and expenditure made it necessary to raise still larger sums from customs. Free trade was absolutely out of the question. "I have only to repeat," he asserted, "in the most emphatic language, my declaration that there is in my judgment no possibility of a change in that system of taxation which I have described, the necessary effect of which is to give a large and ample advantage to the home manufacturer over his competitor abroad." Some reduction of duties on raw materials, some readjustment to lighten the burden on the goods consumed by the poor, there should be, but no sweeping change. The "Globe" dotted his i's and crossed his t's. Tory extravagance had put low tariffs out of the question; the tariff was not an issue in the campaign; there would be no revolutionary changes, no factory would close its doors,

no one but a few Tory hacks would lose a day's work after the election. "After this," it concluded, "no manufacturer has any excuse for ranging himself in hostility to the Liberal party on account of the tariff."

Blake was not to be allowed to decide what would and what would not be an issue. Manufacturers could not forget, or at least were not allowed to forget, that in the past the Liberals had stood, if not for free trade, for at any rate a lower tariff and sweeping reduction of the most burdensome and monopolistic schedules. The Conservative press insisted that it was to Cartwright, not to Blake, that the country must look for light on Liberal tariff policy. Blake had sought to meet this contention in his Malvern speech:

Some of your adversaries presume to say that it is not I who am to expound the party policy on this question, and that you must look elsewhere for light. The general principles and policy of the party have been shaped under my lead by the concurrence of its representatives in parliament. What I have said and am about to say, you may take as authoritative to whatever extent a leader has authority, and so far from there being divergence I can assure you there is in my belief a general concurrence of sentiment between us, including Sir Richard Cartwright, whom I name only because our adversaries delight to represent him as holding other views.

On February 22 the electors rendered judgment, or at least decision. The results were deeply disappointing to the Liberals. A gain of but two seats in Ontario had been offset by a loss of two in Manitoba; Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island sent six more Liberals, and Quebec fifteen more opponents of the

government, but even so Macdonald could count on a majority of thirty. Before the first session was over this majority had grown still higher. The bolting Bleus from Quebec were not able to resist the lure of patronage, and half forgiving, half forgiven, they sheepishly returned to the government fold. Ontario gerrymanders, Quebec episcopal support, protectionist sentiment, administrative patronage and pressure, Macdonald's personal appeal, the division in the Opposition ranks on the Riel and tariff issues, had proved too much once more for the forces of Liberalism.

To Blake defeat came as a personal blow. He was angered, chagrined, filled with doubts of democracy's capacity, doubts of his own powers of leadership. Cartwright's unwillingness wholly to sink his views on the fiscal question rankled. Insomnia and failing health, due in part to overwork but more to nervous worry and ceaseless introspection, lessened his force for the coming uphill fight. He determined to resign the leadership, and in a circular letter, written shortly before parliament opened, he so informed his followers.

It was not the first time Blake had resigned, much less the first he had threatened to resign. He had submitted his resignation to caucus at the opening of the session of 1882, but had been prevailed upon to remain. More than once the government press had accepted his resignation; at intervals during 1885 the "Mail" forecast his retirement and the probable succession of Mowat to the federal leadership. But this was only part of the game of weakening the other party's morale, and



**WILFRID LAURIER**  
Leader of the Liberal Party, 1887  
(At forty-six)



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no more certain prophecy than the "Globe's" jaunty but rather premature remark in 1857 that "John A. is about to retire from politics, a thoroughly used-up character." More to the point were occasional hints thrown out by Blake himself. Replying during the campaign to a taunt of Macdonald that he was "devoured with ambition," he had declared that nothing would suit him better than to return to the ranks; it was his duty to strive for victory, but if the people gave an adverse verdict, he would for his part accept the decision gladly and gratefully. Clearly this was the reaction of a sensitive nature to a foolish charge, and not a considered determination. It was hoped that he would be content with giving an opportunity for the expression of any criticism, and once more assume the leadership. But this time there was to be no drawing back.

Blake's followers recognized that he had idiosyncrasies which told against success as a party leader. With all his absorption in politics and his sincere sympathy with progressive measures, he had not that lively interest in individual men which is indispensable for a leader and particularly a leader in opposition. He stood aloof from his fellows, austere, moody, self-centred. His high-strung nervous temperament forced him to build up a protecting wall of personal reserve. In debate, his comprehensive mind prevented him from assigning a definite share of the assault to his lieutenants; in private conference, he could not easily bend to the light word that would ease a strain or the kindly exaggerated

compliment by which Macdonald bound his liegemen to him. That he was the iceberg his opponents termed him, every man who knew him intimately denied with vigour, but it was true that he moved in higher and more rarified strata of logic than the average man could thrive in. Above all, it was questioned whether he would for long wage a losing fight.

For all that, there was not in any responsible quarter the slightest disposition to question his leadership. Whatever his failings, they were regarded as but evidences of temperament, idiosyncrasies of genius, spots upon the sun. In parliament and out, Liberals cherished the deepest admiration for his masterful intellect, his unswerving probity, his high sense of duty to the State. Defeat did not lessen their confidence or their loyalty. "We knew," as Laurier afterward affirmed, "that no man could then have broken the Tory machine." There was no movement to seek another leader, no eager aspirant for his mantle.

Yet it soon became clear that another leader must be sought. Blake held firmly to his determination to retire. The parliamentary caucus which met at the beginning of the session insisted upon re-electing him, against his protests, but he declined to accept. Through a dull, post-mortem session, the Opposition grappled with the task of finding a successor.

Two men in the Ontario delegation seemed of leadership calibre, and each was willing to undertake the task. Sir Richard Cartwright was one of the strong individualities of the House. Grandson of a distinguished



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Loyalist who had much to do with establishing both the commerce and the public life of Upper Canada on sound foundations; educated in Trinity College, Dublin; president in his thirties of the Commercial Bank; elected to the legislature of united Canada as a Conservative in 1863; gradually separated from his party by distrust of its financial programme, personal hostility to Macdonald, and disappointment over not being chosen to succeed Sir John Rose as Finance Minister in 1869; a strong opponent of Macdonald's railway policy and vigorous in denunciation of the Pacific scandal, Cartwright had finally thrown in his lot with the Liberals and become a member of the Mackenzie government. As Minister of Finance through a period of world-wide depression, Cartwright was compelled by his opponents to bear the responsibility for every closed factory and every open soup-kitchen, and had thrust upon him a reputation for pessimism and a rigid, doctrinaire laissez-faire attitude which was far from earned. Yet in opposition, with evidence ever before him of political corruption, of hand-to-mouth expediency in high places, of the bleeding white of the country by the exodus, he undoubtedly did grow more pessimistic and more vitriolic. A polished gentleman, a finished debater, a master of mordant satire, widely read, with a much wider outlook in international affairs than almost any of his fellow-parliamentarians, Cartwright was a distinct asset in the House, though sometimes a liability in the country. For Blake, whom he was wont to term "Master Blake" (Blake was fifty-four in 1887, and

Cartwright fifty-two) he had little sympathy; his single-track mind could not understand the many windings and turnings of his leader's thought and action.

David Mills, on the contrary, was a warm and loyal follower, almost a worshipper of Blake. Born in Kent County, Ontario, in 1831, educated at the University of Michigan, in turn school-teacher, inspector of schools, editor, barrister, Mills entered parliament for Bothwell in 1867 and for the last two years of the Mackenzie régime served as Minister of the Interior. He was a solid, industrious, straightforward, moderate man, well-read and possessed of a reflective bent and a desire to get down to fundamentals which led Macdonald to call him always the philosopher of Bothwell. He was unquestionably able, but lacked Cartwright's note of distinction. While possessed of his share of ambition, he would have been quite content to keep Blake's seat warm for him if his leader wished at any time to return.

Yet it was to neither of these men that Blake turned. He knew that Cartwright, though respected, was far from universally popular, and the personal antagonism between the two men made him discount his Ontario colleague's vigorous qualities. Mills he held made for a lieutenant's, not a captain's place. In Laurier he recognized a born leader. Intimate intercourse in the House and on many political tours they had taken together had given him the measure of the man. Aside from the personal factor, he felt that it was in Quebec that the Liberal party's greatest opportunity lay. When Mills and Burpee went to Blake on behalf of

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the parliamentary party, seeking advice as to his successor, his reply was emphatic: "There is only one possible choice—Laurier."

To many members of the party the suggestion came as a surprise. They had taken Blake's leadership so much for granted that they had not thought of any other man as more than an aide to the chief. Nor could they now picture Laurier in his place. They had not yet realized the iron determination that lay behind that quiet manner, the latent strength housed in that frail body. An orator of unsurpassed force and grace, they granted, a man of incomparable charm, of unblemished reputation, of high and consistent aims, but a student rather than a fighter, too quiet and retiring for the task of popular leadership, too weak to hold together a party of many strong and assertive personalities and break the hold of Macdonald on the country. Even granting the personal qualities, was it expedient to set a French-speaking Roman Catholic at the head of a party of which the chief strength had always lain in the English-speaking provinces, particularly when the ashes of the Riel controversy still were hot, and Laurier's musket on exhibit in every Tory sanctum? And yet, where was his equal?

Wilfred Laurier knew his own powers too well either to display them before the need came or to fear that they would not suffice. Yet he had not thought of succeeding to the leadership, and was genuinely averse to accepting the task. On personal grounds he preferred the quiet life he had been leading, the practice

of his profession, the constant browsing in the parliamentary library, the daily warm and pleasant communion with chosen friends, the occasional call for a parliamentary jousting. On party grounds, he doubted, even more than his Ontario friends, the wisdom of choosing a man who was too good a Catholic to suit Ontario and not submissive enough to suit Quebec. If Blake must retire, he was convinced that Cartwright was the man to succeed.

When Mills and Burpee reported Blake's attitude, Laurier went to his house, urged him to reconsider, and declared that he could not himself undertake the leadership. Aside from other personal grounds, he was not a man of independent means, and the new post would involve a heavy pecuniary sacrifice; but it was mainly the party reasons against the choice of a leader from Quebec he emphasized. Blake, who was not well, lay stretched upon a sofa, listening while Laurier talked; then repeated his insistence that he must retire and that no other man but Laurier could face the task. "Yes, Mr. Laurier," added Mrs. Blake, who was present and who had evidently discussed the question many times with her husband, "you are the only man for it."

On June 2, two months after the House met, Blake definitely resigned. An advisory committee was named in caucus, Cartwright and Mills from Ontario, Laurier and François Langelier from Quebec, Charles Weldon from New Brunswick, A. G. Jones from Nova Scotia, L. H. Davies from Prince Edward Island, and Robert Watson from Manitoba. This was only a stop-gap

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measure; the choice of a leader had to be made without further delay. On reflection, the majority of the party had come to Blake's way of thinking. At a caucus held on June 7, the leadership was offered to Laurier, Cartwright making the nomination and Mills seconding it. Even yet, he hesitated, and deferred a definite answer until the end of the session. When the session drew to a close, he was persuaded, still against his judgment, to accept the task and to announce his acceptance to the country. Even so, he insisted to the caucus that he would retire if Blake's health returned. At the age of forty-six years Wilfred Laurier became the leader of the party he was to guide for over thirty years.

The announcement stirred much comment. The pervading note was of good-will tempered by doubt. "L'Electeur" and "La Patrie" rejoiced that one great Canadian had been found to succeed another, and forecast fair fortunes for Laurier, Liberalism and Canada. The "Globe" was more restrained in its eulogies. On June 8, commenting on a report that Laurier had been elected leader for the session only, it declared that "his appointment would be as judicious and generally acceptable as any," but that it would be a grave error to make him or any other man merely a temporary leader: Blake's return was absolutely out of the question. A fortnight later, on the announcement of Laurier's acceptance, the greeting was warmer: there was every reason to believe that Laurier would justify as fully as Blake did the old maxim that the man whom a great place seeks is the man to fill a great place worthily:

an admirable speaker, a man of courage, patriotism, character; not yet possessed of Blake's mastery of procedure or of business detail, but sure to develop: "he has most gallantly and unselfishly placed himself at the disposal of his friends; every Liberal owes him gratitude and every Conservative owes him justice and fair play." And yet a lingering doubt is reflected in the fact that for weeks thereafter the new leader's name never occurs in the columns of the chief journal of the party. The "Mail" frankly and fairly recognized the new leader's quality. A less sympathetic view was reflected in the Toronto "World": Laurier was not the Moses to lead the Liberals out of the wilderness; an orator, not a parliamentarian, of little political judgment, amiable, but not the stuff of which leaders are made. And "La Minerve," suddenly discovering the departing leader's greatness, lamented the "replacing of a giant by a pigmy"; Laurier's election might gratify the *amour propre* of Quebec, but it would assure the Conservatives of twenty-five years of power: it would be the régime of the worthy M. Joly transferred to the federal house. Later in the year "La Minerve" somewhat less ungraciously expressed its fear that the task would prove above his strength, and at the same time its willingness to applaud a compatriot if he rose to his opportunity.

Wilfrid Laurier became leader of the Liberal party in his forty-sixth year. He had been in political life since thirty, and for all but three years of this time in

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the federal parliament. Time had tested his political qualities; it had not weakened his political interest. His character was formed, his opinions ripened, his capacities developed. Authority was to give a sharper edge to some of his powers, age was to bring some disillusionment, the turns of fate were to reveal to the public some unexpected phases of his character and capacity, but in all essentials the Wilfrid Laurier upon whom Edward Blake's mantle had fallen so unexpectedly in 1887 was the Wilfrid Laurier of the next thirty years.

It was pre-eminently to his character that Wilfrid Laurier owed his new place. The public knew him as the silver-tongued orator, his party hailed him as a firm and skilled exponent of its principles, but it was not his oratory, it was not his opinions, that chiefly marked him out for power. Less consciously and obviously it was the moral qualities of the man that won the allegiance of those who knew him best, his courage, his self-control, his honour, his essential kindness. Courage was perhaps his outstanding quality. He was not reckless; he was not regardless of the choice of the paths that led to a goal; he was ever an opportunist as to means; he had constantly in mind the necessity of keeping the country moving abreast, but for all that he was unflinching and unafraid wherever he found a principle at stake. Self-control had marked him from student days, the assurance of power, the patience to wait, the vigilance of phrase, moderation in criticism and attack. Honour was rooted in him. No friend ever complained that

Wilfrid Laurier had deceived or misled him; no opponent ever charged that he had been tricked, or treated with other than scrupulous chivalry. It was a bold man who could propose in Laurier's presence any shady policy, and if he ventured, it was not long until he wilted into stammering silence under the calm influence of a noble presence. Laurier shrank from mean and ignoble things with a repugnance that was almost physical. He was ambitious, and the fondness for power grew with its exercise, but he was too proud to stoop, too fastidious to make cheap bids for popularity. And yet he was not self-centred; he did not hold himself aloof. A deep and genuine kindness marked all his actions; it shone in the laughing intercourse with old friends in his home, in his warm interest in children, in the tolerant attitude toward those who differed from him. The perfect courtesy that marked him through all his years was no calculated and superficial accomplishment; it was the natural outcome of a spirit wherein friendly interest in his fellows and respect for himself were subtly fused.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laurier's estimate of Antoine Dorion is curiously applicable to himself; Dorion had been his boyish ideal and had profoundly influenced his development:

"Considered as party leader Mr. Dorion was himself, and could be compared with none other. In opinions no one could have been more democratic, but he never had resource to those expedients which are sometimes considered indispensable in democratic politics. A man of exquisitely courteous manners he yet repelled all familiarity. He never resorted to the facile method of courting popularity by spending himself on every side. He never sought to flatter vulgar passion; he never deviated from the path which seemed to him to be the path of truth. He never sought success for the love of success, but he fought persistently for the right as he saw it. He faced defeat without weakness, and when success came it did not take away his modesty."



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The distinction of his presence was in keeping with the distinction of his character. Tall, slight, but with a broad pair of shoulders, of irregular features, smooth face, pale complexion, hair jet-black, he stood out in any company. There was about him an indefinable touch of authority. "The three greatest French-Canadian chieftains of democracy," his friend Senator David has noted, "Papineau, Dorion and Laurier, were all of aristocratic appearance; their bearing, their manners, their features, were stamped with the imprint of unusual distinction." In friendly talk his features were in repose, benovolent, serene; when business was on foot his wary eye sharpened and his face became as expressionless and impenetrable as a mask.

It was as a speaker that he had first made his mark. He had now become incomparably the first parliamentary orator, and one of the most skilled debators in Canada's annals. He had not Blake's range of mind, his grasp and marshalling of intricate detail; he had not Chapleau's brilliance and theatrical passion; he could not play on crowds with the power and dash of Mercier; but he had distinctive qualities of his own which gave him the mastery on the floor of parliament. He did not speak often. When he did speak he confined himself to a few broad points, developing them logically, calmly, persuasively. The thought was not abtruse, the reasoning not subtle; it seemed to the hearer plain common sense, touched with emotion, heightened with imagination, sharpened in a clinching phrase. In debate he was

wary, alert, ready in resource, courteous but insistent, rarely giving an opponent an opening and rarely missing the weak joint in the opponent's armour. His clear silvery voice, his easy gesture, his twinkling eye as he rallied an opponent, his stern features as he denounced injustice, dominated his hearers.

Laurier had been reluctant to assume the task. Once it was assumed, he threw himself vigorously into all its duties. He realized that it was necessary to get in touch with the rank and file of the party as well as with its leaders. Quebec he already knew. In the summer of 1888, accompanied by Mme. Laurier, he made a long tour through western Ontario, giving a number of addresses, but seeking chiefly to make the personal acquaintance of the Liberal stalwarts in each riding. His extempore speeches in English were not at first as fluent and finished as he desired, but before the tour was over he had gained ease and confidence. Everywhere his fine presence, his unaffected friendliness and interest, his frank discussion of the country's affairs, won warm allegiance. In the House his success was still more rapid and complete. At the beginning of the session of 1888 he had to face the aloofness of a number of members who had accepted his leadership without enthusiasm, as merely a *pis aller*.<sup>1</sup> Their lukewarmness was not of long duration. From the outset Laurier revealed a grasp of policy, a courage

<sup>1</sup> A letter from an Ontario Liberal member, John Charlton, forecasting a gloomy future for a party with a French Catholic leader and with "machine politicians like J. D. Edgar" high in its councils, which became public, illustrated this attitude.

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and firmness combined with prudence, tact, and unfailing good temper, a careful planning of parliamentary activities together with a readiness to let his associates share the work and the honours, a genuine individual interest in his followers, which stirred them to eager loyalty. At the close of the session they expressed unanimous, unqualified, and enthusiastic allegiance. The new leader had established his right to lead.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARKET, FLAG, AND CREED

A Canadian Stock-taking—Political Discontent and Economic Stagnation—Heroic Remedies—Imperial Federation—Annexation—Independence—Seeking New Markets—An Imperial *Zollverein*—Commercial Union with the United States—Laurier's Attitude—The Jesuits' Estates Diversion—Macdonald and Mercier—McCarthy and the Dual-Language Question—Blake and the Leadership—The Canadian Pacific again in Politics—The Election of 1891—The Old Man, the Old Flag, and the Old Policy—The Blake Postscript.

**W**HEN Wilfrid Laurier assumed the leadership of the Liberal party, he found the country facing new issues and new phases of old issues. To follow a man like Edward Blake would in any case have called for every quality of leadership he possessed. When the situation was complicated by the emergence of difficult and thorny problems, charged with political dynamite and potent to sweep away old party boundaries, the test became as searching as could well be conceived.

The ghost of Louis Riel, though not exorcised, no longer walked nightly. Riel lay in his grave; his Métis followers had gone back to their carts and their ploughs; the government had been put on its trial and had escaped punishment. The storm that had swept Quebec and Ontario died away. But when the waters of racial passion have been stirred to their depths, they do not easily come to rest. In the Jesuits' Estates

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controversy, in the demand for the abolition of French in the schools of Ontario and the legislature of the North-West, and later in the protracted struggle over the schools of Manitoba, the country and its political leaders had to face the aftermath of the storm.

Nor was it merely questions of race and creed that called for prudent and courageous handling. The first term of Laurier's leadership and the first general election which followed were occupied still more absorbingly with the problem of Canada's trade and political connection with the United Kingdom and the United States. For the first time in the history of the Dominion, the issue of its national future and its relationship to outside powers, particularly to the two great English-speaking communities, became of wide and dominant popular interest. The question was not raised by party leaders. It grew out of the country's need, and found its first expression through men who had played little part in politics. The character and the ambitions of individual men had much to do with the form in which the issue arose and the solution which it received, but they did not create it. Given Canada's historical relations with the United Kingdom, her geographical connection with the United States, and the trend of her own political and industrial development after Confederation, the rise of the issue was inevitable.

In 1887 Canada had experienced twenty years of Confederation, and nearly ten of the national policy. What did the stock-taking show?

Confederation was to bring national unity, to create

a common Canadian sentiment which would submerge provincial prejudices, end all hankering for union with the United States, and prepare the Dominion for a relationship of equality with the mother country. Had this unity developed? For the most part it was still a hope unrealized. True, the federal solution had removed some of the more contentious questions from the common parliament, but enough remained, or could be dragged back, to keep sectional jealousy aflame. True, there was no little growth of Canadian national sentiment, as the North-West rebellion gave opportunity for proving, and even in the Maritime provinces many men had become used to calling themselves 'Canadians', but it was doubtful whether this sentiment was strong enough to enable the Dominion to resist the separatist tendencies from within or the attraction of greater bodies from without. There was little provincial intercourse; in 1881, despite the building of the Intercolonial, there were not a thousand Ontarians in the Maritime provinces and there were actually fewer Maritime province men in Ontario than there had been in 1861. When a Nova Scotia' or New Brunswick lad sought wider fields, it was not to Toronto or Montreal he turned, but to Boston or New York.

Nova Scotia, despite increased federal subsidies which Nova Scotians regarded as belated instalments of bare justice and Ontario grudged as necessary bribes, was still unreconciled to having been forced into 'Confederation'. In May, 1886, William S. Fielding had

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moved a series of resolutions in the Nova Scotia legislature, pointing out how much the condition of the province, commercially and financially, had changed for the worse, insisting that the objections which had been urged against union in 1867 still applied with greater force, and proposed secession from the Dominion, to form either a separate province or a maritime union under the Crown. The resolutions carried by a vote of fifteen to seven and in the elections which followed the Fielding government was sustained by an overwhelming majority; curiously, a year later the Conservatives won in the federal fight, giving Fielding a reason or excuse for going no further with his proposals. Ontario and Quebec were rent by a more bitter quarrel than any since the fifties, and the end was not yet. Quebec newspapers were still railing against the intolerance which had sent a lunatic (or a hero) to the scaffold, while in Ontario the "Mail" was threatening to smash Confederation into its original fragments rather than submit to French Catholic dictation. In the West, armed rebellion had broken out among the Métis and resentment against high tariffs and railway monopolies was running high among the English-speaking farmers. The Manitoba farmer bore fifteen cents a bushel handicap as compared with his Minnesota neighbour in the cost of shipping wheat to Liverpool; local rates on coal and lumber and general merchandise were from two to four times as high as for equal distances in the Eastern provinces, and the West held, not climate

or geography, but Macdonald and Van Horne and the policy of artificial restriction of trade and trade channels to blame.

At Confederation it had been hoped that a new stage and new players would bring higher political standards. The hard reality was the Canada of gerrymanders and Red Parlour funds, a low and stagnant level of political methods that affected both parties and had its source in the popular indifference that soon forgot Pacific scandals. Nor had Canada taken the position in the Empire and among the nations of the world that had been hoped. In Great Britain she was considered a colony which had ceased to fulfil the natural functions of a colony and would some day go the way of all colonies, though in some quarters there was a reviving interest and a belief that Britain's overseas possessions would still prove serviceable. In the United States, where Canada had been given a thought at all, she had been considered an Arctic fringe, at the moment merely a pawn in Britain's hands, but destined some day to knock for admission to the Union. Latterly, friction over the Northeastern fisheries had made her better if not more favourably known. Elsewhere, Canada was about as well known as Spitzbergen or Kamschatka to the outside world to-day.

In his first public address after his election to the leadership, at a political picnic held at Somerset, in the county of Megantic, on August 2, 1887, Laurier emphasized the failure to attain national unity, and laid the blame at the government's door. National



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unity, he insisted, must be every patriot's aim, and not least the aim of every French-Canadian:

French-Canadians, I ask you one thing, that, while remembering that I, a French-Canadian, have been elected leader of the Liberal party of Canada, you will not lose sight of the fact that the limits of our common country are not confined to the province of Quebec, but that they extend to all the territory of Canada, and that our country is wherever the British flag waves in America. I ask you to remember this in order to remind you that your duty is simply and above all to be Canadians. To be Canadians! That was the object of Confederation in the intention of its authors; the aim and end of Confederation was to bring the different races closer together, to soften the asperities of their mutual relations and to connect the scattered groups of British subjects.

Unfortunately this aim had not been attained:

This was the programme twenty years ago. But are the divisions ended? The truth is that after twenty years' trial of the system, the Maritime provinces submit to Confederation, but do not love it. The province of Manitoba is in open revolt against the Dominion government, gentlemen, not in armed revolt, as in the revolt of the half-breeds, but in legal revolt. The province of Nova Scotia demands its separation from the Confederation. In fact, carry your gaze from east to west and from north to south and everywhere the prevailing feeling will be found to be one of unrest and uneasiness, of discontent and irritation.

. . . The fault rests with the men who have governed us, the fault rests with the men who, instead of governing according to the spirit of our institutions, have disregarded the principle of local liberties and local interests, the recognition of which is the very basis of our constitution. . . . In a country like ours, with a heterogeneous population, . . . a federative union is the only one that can secure civil and

political liberty. . . . Legislative separation is the most powerful factor in national unity. . . . Unfortunately the constitution has placed in the hands of the government a terrible weapon which it has used, when and how it pleased, to assail the local liberties of the provinces, . . . the veto power, which is by far the most arbitrary weapon with which tyranny has ever armed a federal government.

If Confederation had not brought national unity, or higher political standards or a place in the world's regard, had the National Policy given the economic benefits its sponsors had promised? The trial had been shorter, but the evidence of failure was almost equally strong.

Protection was to assure prosperity to the manufacturer, bring home markets to the farmer, and force the lowering of the United States tariff wall—"a reciprocity of trade through a reciprocity of tariffs." There had been an outburst of prosperity, with the revival of good times the world over in 1880, and the impulse to trade that came with the building of the Canadian Pacific and the fitting out of the settlers and speculators who followed in its wake. But now the reaction had come. The days of construction, with millions to fling, were over, and the penny-counting days of operating had succeeded. Of the settlers who had poured into the West, a great proportion proved merely tourists; frost, drought, grasshoppers, high railway rates, low wheat prices, the prospect of hard work, drove them east or south. Corner lots in mushroom cities relapsed into prairie, and Eastern shareholders in colonization companies found there was many a wait

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between the prospectus and the settler. For a time protection had encouraged the building and expansion of Eastern factories, notably in the textile, sugar, and iron and steel industries, but with the home market stagnant and the market of the United States still barred, this expansion led to over-production, the closing down of the weaker plants, and constant cries for a larger dose of the stimulant. The farmer's home markets shared the same restriction; in the British market, he faced the world's competition; from the United States he was still shut out. The club of retaliation had been no more successful than the olive branch of low tariffs in inducing the United States to mend its ways.

The statistics of trade, railway traffic, bank deposits, revealed the stagnation or snail-like progress of the country. But the most convincing and most alarming evidence was furnished by the slow growth of population at home and the swelling exodus to the United States. Between 1851 and 1861 the province of Canada had grown over six hundred thousand, and between 1871 and 1881 the Dominion nearly seven hundred thousand, but between 1881 and 1891 by a bare half-million. Between 1881 and 1891 the population of Manitoba and the North-West grew from 120,000 to 250,000, but Dakota alone in the same period had leaped from 135,000 to 510,000. Canadians flocked to the United States, Maritime-province men to Boston, French-Canadians to the mill towns of New England, Ontario men to the border cities and Dakota farms; contrary to current belief, over half of these emigrants sought the farm,

not the city. Canada with its four million people and its vast acres had sent more of its sons to the building of the republic than England with its thirty millions and its crowded land. There were virtually as many Canadian doctors, nurses, architects, bartenders, actors, engineers, cotton-mill operatives, lumbermen, in the United States as in Canada itself. Counting native-born, the children of two native-born parents and half the children claiming one Canadian parent, there were in the United States in 1890 one and a half-million Canadians, or over one-third the home population. Never in history, save perhaps from crowded and misgoverned Ireland, had there been such an exodus from one country to another. "In literal fashion," declared Sir Richard Cartwright, whose scriptures, according to Nicholas Flood Davin, began with Exodus and ended with Lamentations, "the United States are becoming literally flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. I know whole counties, I know great regions in Canada where you cannot find one single solitary Canadian family which has not a son or a daughter or a brother or a sister or some near and dear relative now inhabiting the United States."

Whence could escape be found from national disunion and economic stagnation? Desperate conditions called for drastic remedies. Canada had failed to find salvation in her own resources. Why not merge her political or her industrial fortunes with one or the other of the greater English-speaking peoples? Imperial federation and imperial preferential trade, political

union and commercial union with the United States,—all found their eager advocates.

The swing to closer relations with Great Britain came first, though it did not in this period bulk so large. A new stage was opening in the transformation of the British Empire. In early days the colonies had been regarded as possessions of the mother country, markets for its wares, sources of the raw materials required, to be defended against other colony-hungry powers and to be controlled by British governors. Then had come the era of emancipation. The growth of the colonies in numbers and self-confidence had coincided with the decay in Britain of the belief that protection at home and monopoly of colonial trade brought profit. Britain abandoned trade monopoly and political control together. The colonies took over a steadily increasing share of the management of their own affairs. In Britain, most men expected the movement would continue until complete independence was reached. But in the colonies the force of habit, inherited loyalties, the renewal of ties by fresh immigration, the desire for military aid, the lack of any precipitating crisis, brought content with British connection. Then after the Franco-Prussian War the tide turned once more. The development of military ambitions and tariff wars on the Continent, the entrance of European powers upon the race for overseas possessions in which Britain had long been without a rival, revived the imperial spirit in Britain. A movement began to avert the drift to independence and instead to link the colonies in closer

union. The new tendencies found expression in the activities of the Imperial Federation League. Its chief purpose was to secure from the colonies military support for British policies. To reconcile them to this obligation, they were to be given representation in a parliament in London to which control over the Empire's common affairs, whatever they might be, would be entrusted. The league was organized in London in 1884, with Hon. W. H. Forster and Lord Rosebery as leading spirits. Branches were established in Canada and Australia and a vigorous campaign of popular education begun.

At first imperial federation made a strong appeal in Canada. The desire to retain British connections was strong, and yet men were increasingly discontented with the subordinate part which Canada still played in external affairs. Representation in a common parliament in London seemed to open a way out. Then, as the attempt was made to crystallize the perorations in a working plan, difficulties which proved insuperable came to light. How was the parliament or council to be constituted? What of India's position? Would the colonies have to give up old powers as well as secure new ones? Would taxation with fractional representation prove acceptable? Many men keenly interested in public affairs and fired with a burning pride in the memories and achievements of the British race—Principal Grant, Colonel Denison, D'Alton McCarthy—had faith that the questions could be answered, given time and good-will. But no party leader, closer in

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touch with realities, was convinced. Macdonald held parliamentary federation "an idle dream"; "Canada would never consent to be taxed by a central body sitting at London, in which she would have practically no voice." Blake, who had been one of the first to welcome the proposal as an outlet from colonial dependence, became convinced of its futility. "A quarter of a century past," he declared in the British House of Commons in 1900, "I dreamed the dream of imperial parliamentary federation, but many years ago I came to the conclusion that we had passed the turning that could lead to that terminus, if ever, indeed, there was a practicable road."

While some were looking to London for salvation, others looked to Washington. The agitation for closer political union with the older branch of the English-speaking peoples provoked a counter-agitation for political union with the younger branch. The chief supporter of annexation was Goldwin Smith, an Oxford Don who, after a brief residence in the United States, had made Toronto his home and had undertaken the double task of developing literary standards in Canada and of convincing the Canadian people of the opportunity that awaited them of becoming the Scotland of North America. For a time he was a voice crying in the wilderness. Then despair of national unity, commercial depression, the desire to find a way out of the incessant fishery and border conflicts with the United States, hostility to the European entanglements which the imperialists proposed, brought converts. There

were more advocates of annexation in Canada in the decade from 1886 to 1896 than at any other time before or since, but even so they remained a small if vigorous minority,—considered not merely traitorous but scarcely even respectable. British sympathies, French-Canadian preference for the *status quo*, the nascent Canadian spirit, antagonisms traditional since United Empire Loyalist days and the War of 1812, proved forces too great to overcome.

It was not surprising that the constant and vigorous advocacy of the merging of Canada's identity in British or American union provoked a movement in favour of independence. Many Canadians had considered Confederation only a first step toward separation. In the early seventies Galt and McDougall had urged that only through independence could responsibility be developed and Canada, instead of a hostage for Britain's submissive conduct, become a link of friendship and ensurer of peace between Britain and the United States. But the time was not ripe, and much of the vague nationalist feeling was diverted into economic rather than political channels when the national policy struck out for industrial independence. Now the sentiment revived. If a change in Canada's political status was to be made, why not take the courageous and clear-cut solution of independence?

Laurier was never a man to raise questions before they were ripe. He did not believe that any far-reaching change was imminent or desirable, but he did believe that when a change came it should and would



be toward independence. Speaking on the reciprocity issue in the House of Commons in March, 1888, he declared:

It was our hope at one time to make this country a nation. It is our hope yet. ["Hear, hear!"] I hail that sentiment with joy, with unbounded joy, all the more that it is altogether unforeseen. I had expected, from the talk we have heard from these gentlemen on the other side of the House, that they expected that this country would forever and forever remain a colony: I see now that they have higher aspirations, and I give them credit for that. Colonies are destined to become nations, as it is the destiny of a child to become a man. No one, even on the other side, will assume that this country, which will some day number a larger population than Great Britain, is forever to remain in its present political relation with Great Britain. The time is coming when the present relations of Great Britain and Canada must either become closer or be severed altogether. . . . If ever and whenever Canada chooses, to use the language of Lord Palmerston, to stand by herself, the separation will take place not only in peace but in friendship and in love, as the son leaves the house of his father to become himself the father of a family. But this is not the question of to-day.

Two years later, at a banquet in the Club National at Montreal, in celebration of Mercier's electoral victory, he rebuked a little clique that was talking of "the creation of a French-speaking republic on the banks of the St. Lawrence," and continued:

When I say that I am not one of those who wish for the breaking up of Confederation, and favour the creation of little principalities in our midst, I do not mean to say that we should always remain a colony. On the contrary, the day is coming when this country will have to take its place among the

nations of the earth, but I do not want to see my country's independence attained through the hostility of one race to the others. I do not want my country's independence to be conceived in the blood of civil war. I want my country's independence to be reached through the normal and regular progress of all the elements of its population toward the realization of a common aspiration.

Again in 1892, in supporting a resolution of D'Alton McCarthy in favour of the appointment of a Canadian representative at Washington, which the government was unwilling to accept in full, he renewed his profession of faith in independence as the ultimate destiny of Canada:

The honourable gentleman [Charles Tupper] said there was no precedent for this motion, and nothing similar in the history of nations. I am sure that he is right . . . but at the same time there has been no instance in the history of nations of a colony occupying toward the mother country the position that Canada occupies toward Great Britain. Canada has been the first colony in the world to obtain the right of self-government, and the present motion is simply a development of the policy adopted fifty years ago when we claimed and obtained the right to govern ourselves. . . . The motion is proposed by an honourable gentleman, whose views, as to the future of Canada, are well known to be in favour of a closer relation with Great Britain than we now have. The motion is supported by myself, and it is known that I do not believe that the present condition of things will endure forever. The present relations between us and Great Britain must become either closer or looser. My opinion is that in the course of time the relations of Canada with Great Britain must cease, as the relations of colonies with the mother country do cease, by independence, just as a child becomes a man. There are the views I hold, not in regard to the present or actual policy, but as to the future of the country.

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The sentiment in favour of eventual independence was strongest in the Liberal ranks. The Liberal party had fought for and achieved self-government in home affairs. It had urged, under Blake and Mackenzie, Canada's claim to make her own commercial treaties. Now the policy of complete independence found much support within its ranks. The Young Liberals' Club in Toronto in 1889 and 1890 leaned strongly in that direction. The "Globe" urged it repeatedly. Irritated by failure of British support in the Atlantic fisheries dispute, the "Globe" declared in February, 1888:

So long as the Canadian people remain unwilling to assume the responsibility of independent nationality, so long must they expect to be despoiled by the United States with British consent and aid. Canada is far worse off in dealing with the United States than she would be if independent. . . . The truth is that the connection seriously embarrasses England and seriously embarrasses and injures Canada. So long as we insist upon retaining it, we cannot justly complain of suffering for the indulgence in a noble loyalty to a country five-sixths of us never saw.

Commenting on an independence speech of Malcolm Cameron, in December, 1889, it declared: "The spirit of independence is certainly moving throughout the land. . . . Mr. Mowat, though deeply devoted to British connection, stated the other day at Woodstock that he hoped a change, if one must come, would be to independence instead of annexation." "The colonial status," it insisted a month later, "is being rapidly outgrown. Ultimate independence seems so reasonable a destiny for the Dominion that very many of the older

generation of Canadians unite heartily with the young men in its advocacy.”

Still more significant was the development in this period of the conception of independence without separation, as a final goal or a next step, the conversion of the Empire into a league of equal states linked only by allegiance to a common Crown. Sir John Macdonald, at Confederation, had foreshadowed the growth of the colonies into “auxiliary kingdoms,” but it was in the Liberal ranks that the idea found its freest expression. Mr. J. D. Edgar in 1885 and Sir Richard Cartwright in 1887 urged that the Queen was to be regarded as Queen of Canada, and that a new equality would follow that recognition. The “Globe” developed the idea, and alternating with expressions of opinion in favour of unqualified independence of the older type, its columns presented with remarkable insight and, so far as is known, for the first time in any detail, that conception of the Empire as a league of equal states which it has been the task of these later years to make a reality.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Mr. Cattanach says that Canadians have no alternative but Imperial Federation or Annexation. We have a third and better alternative and we say that complete independence is perfectly consistent with British connection. Let Her Majesty take the title of Queen of Canada, let her be advised directly by her Canadian Ministers, and Canada will be as independent as England, which is sufficiently independent for any country, without being separated from England, without breaking the Canadian tradition, and with perfect satisfaction to the sentiments of all Canadians and Englishmen who are not mainly concerned to keep this country subordinate to Downing Street.”—“Globe,” Feb. 27, 1889.

“The *Globe* has often propounded as an alternative project to imperial federation, and a vastly better one, the abolition of the few legislative disabilities that now pertain to the colonies, and the formation of an international league under the Old Crown between the Mother Country and the various sovereign powers which such an abolition would create.

None of these projects of political change reached the stage of practical action. Imperial federation had behind it the most fervent and wide-spread sentiment, but the nebulous vagueness of the schemes of its advocates, the conflict within the movement between those who stressed imperial defence and those who stressed imperial trade, and the impossibility of reconciling any form of imperial centralization with nationalist spirit, kept it still an aspiration. Annexation had behind it alluring and immediate prospects of individual gain and national security, but it ran hopelessly counter to deep traditions, prejudices, loyalties, which were of the very soul of the people. Toward independence the country moved with every increase of strength and confidence, but as yet any formal programme of separation was premature and won little assent. Imperial federation and annexation neutralized each other, each saved the country from the other, permitting all the while the growth of a national spirit which would not seek absorption in either greater branch of the English-speaking peoples.

The question of political status was of the morrow; the questions of trade, markets, profits, were of the day. Reaction from the prosperity which had gleamed

Such a league, we have pointed out, while amply satisfying all the considerations of sentiment which are urged in favour of British connection, would at the same time save the colonies from the imperial and European complications in which Imperial Federation would involve us. Canada, for instance, under such an alliance, though she might still acknowledge the sovereignty of the Queen, could not be involved in England's quarrels without her own consent, and this consent any nation engaged in a war with England would be scrupulously careful to give her no reason to cease to withhold."—"Globe," Feb. 20, 1890.

in Canada since 1880 forced the issue of larger markets to the front.

The United Kingdom did not appear to offer a new outlet. Its markets were already free to Canada, but they were also free to the rest of the world. There was little prospect of ousting the United States, Russia, Australia, from their share in Britain's imports. Only if Britain could be induced to abandon free trade, to return to her old policy of protection with its incidental possibilities of colonial preference, to seek once more to build up a self-contained empire, could special favour come. Of that few had hope. In England a rare fair-trader called for high tariffs and retaliation, but the overwhelming voice of the country agreed with Disraeli that protection was not only dead but damned. In Canada, the memory of old preferential days had lingered longer; for a brief moment, in the early days of the N. P., when English traders were throwing stones at his industrial conservatories, Macdonald thought of urging England, too, to build glass houses, but Disraeli's fall brought his plans to grief. In imperial federation circles, the possibility of cementing the Empire by customs privileges kept recurring, but the conviction that rightly or wrongly England would stick to free trade for generations to come, robbed the project of any practical appeal. It was chiefly as a rhetorical alternative to closer trade relations with the United States that imperial preference or an imperial *Zollverein* was urged.

For it was the question of access to the markets of

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the United States that dominated Canadian politics in these years. Those markets had always bulked large on Canada's horizon. For three thousand miles her borders marched with those of the most prosperous and rapidly expanding country in the world. Even though many of the products of the two countries were the same, in large part each complemented the other and even where both had a surplus, the accidents of geography made it more convenient for Nova Scotia to market its coal in New England and for Pennsylvania to fill the bins of Ontario. The United States was Canada's "natural market." But human nature was also natural, and a leaning to protection seemed part of the inheritance from Adam. Tariff walls had long hampered, though they could not wholly block, the movements of trade. In the reciprocity period, from 1854 to 1866, a wide breach had been made, and natural products were exchanged freely to mutual advantage. Then the bitterness of civil war antagonisms had led the United States to bang, bar, and bolt the door. Canada had done her best to open it again. Galt and Rose, Macdonald and Brown, Grit and Tory, had gone more than half-way to meet the United States, but had gone in vain. The United States was prosperous, content, indifferent. Protectionist feeling was strong. Local interests which might be prejudiced were firmly entrenched. The division of authority between President and Congress made negotiation difficult and ratification a gamble.

Now it appeared that an opening had come. In

Canada, depression was giving a new insistence to the longing of farmers, miners, lumbermen, for open markets. For the first time since the Civil War, the professedly low-tariff party in the United States held executive power. Its manufacturers were beginning to think of finding new outlets. Yet it was doubtful whether the United States could be brought to accede to any limited measure of reciprocity. The more sweeping policy of a North American *Zollverein* might perhaps strike the republic's imagination.

For thirty years, proposals for a North American *Zollverein*, or commercial union, had found distinguished but sporadic backing in both the United States and Canada. This project involved absolute free trade between the United States and Canada, with a common tariff, arranged by joint agreement, against the outside world, and probably a pooling of customs dues; reciprocal free use of the fisheries might be made an incident. The proposal had never found wide or enduring favour. Now the time and the man had come. Erastus Wiman, a Canadian business man who had found prosperity in New York, took the idea from an American capitalist interested in Canadian ores, Samuel Ritchie, and his legal adviser, Hezekiah Butterworth, then a member of Congress. Wiman's intimate acquaintance with business conditions in both countries, the opportunities of propaganda afforded by his interests in commercial-credit agencies and telegraph companies, and his organizing capacity enabled him to force the proposal to the front. Supported or hampered by the co-operation of



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Goldwin Smith, and finding a surprisingly quick response in farming and mining and lumbering circles, Wiman carried the torch through Ontario in the summer of 1887. Farmers' institute after farmers' institute endorsed his proposals, and it soon became apparent that a new issue had entered Canadian politics.

The power of the press in selecting, shaping, and forcing an issue was never more clearly displayed in Canada than in the campaign that followed. Ontario was the centre of the movement. For a time its fortunes rose and fell with the attitude of the Toronto "Mail." Founded in 1872 as a Conservative organ, "to smite the Grits under the fifth rib every morning," as it once avowed, the "Mail" had made this duty a pleasure. For years it had reflected the party will without question. Then after the Riel episode it began to emphasize two issues, commercial union with the United States and hostility to French-Canadian and hierarchical domination, without considering too closely how they would affect the interests of the party. In a measure history was repeating itself. In 1849 the advocates of political union with the United States were recruited chiefly from the Tories, who had been hit in their pride by the rise of French-Canadian rebels to power and in their pocket by Britain's change of fiscal policy; the annexationists of '49 were determined to find new markets at any cost and to remain English even if they had to cease to be British. Now the journal which had led the attack on Quebec for its defence of Riel and had talked of smashing 'Con-

federation into its original fragments, found in commercial union with the United States a panacea alike for French-Canadian domination and for business stagnation.

The "Mail's" policy was shaped in no small measure by its chief editorial writer, Edward Farrer. Farrer was the most extraordinary figure in Canadian journalism. A brilliant Irishman of uncertain antecedents, educated for the priesthood but forced by growing disbelief to forego the Church's service, he had found his destiny, after some business adventures, in newspaper work in Canada. He combined a keen interest in political and economic questions with unwearied zeal in investigation and most convincing powers of exposition. His curious flexibility, his powers of secretiveness, his loyalty after a fashion, made him capable on occasion of editing a morning newspaper of one political stripe and an evening newspaper of the contrary colour, in the same city, fulminating in turn against the futilities of his esteemed contemporary, and led in later years to his being entrusted by politicians on both sides with commissions of discreet inquiry without ever betraying a confidence. Yet he was a man of real convictions of which hostility to the presumption of the hierarchy and a belief in the inevitableness of Canada's political union with the United States were foremost. Farrer's lucid, informing, business-like editorials in the "Mail" were the most important factors in the growth of commercial union sentiment in 1887.

The Toronto "Globe," still edited by John Cameron,

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was not the oracle it had been in George Brown's day, but it was still a power. Its attitude on the trade issue wavered. During the elections of 1887 it had endorsed Blake's assurances that the tariff was out of politics. When Wiman and the "Mail" thrust commercial union forward, the "Globe" first rebuked its contemporary for assuming that sentimental considerations could be ignored, then on further inquiry found that national and imperial sentiment would be advanced rather than hampered by commercial union.

Party leaders were less responsive to the new proposals. The Conservative party, champions of protection and already in control of the administration, were least inclined to any change. Yet even Conservative leaders recognized that some concession must be made. Tupper and Foster, faced with low-tariff sentiment in the Maritime provinces, were more open to conviction than Macdonald or Langevin, closely leagued with Red Parlour groups of protected manufacturers in Ontario and Quebec. In 1887 the government, with Tupper chiefly urging, tried the traditional policy of linking fisheries and trade concessions. At the suggestion of Wiman, Tupper visited Washington and conferred with Thomas F. Bayard, Cleveland's Secretary of State, thus incidentally breaking down the diplomatic convention which made conversation between Ottawa and Washington a leisurely triangular process, Canadian ministers through the governor-general communicating with the Colonial Secretary in London, who took up the matter with the Foreign Office, which

gave instructions to the British minister in Washington, who interviewed the State Department, and then began to wind up the coil again. Bayard displayed a statesmanlike breadth and a grasp of the issues involved which had been rare at Washington. A commission, consisting of Sir Lionel Sackville-West, British minister at Washington, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and Sir Charles Tupper, representing the British and Canadian governments, and James B. Angell and W. L. Putnam for the United States, met at Washington in the summer of 1887. Tupper at once proposed a measure of trade reciprocity, later described as "an unrestricted offer of reciprocity," in return for such reciprocity in fishing rights as had been enjoyed under the Treaty of Washington, but the American commissioners declined to purchase immunity from what they deemed hostile and unneighbourly aggression by trade concessions. A treaty providing a fair settlement of the fisheries dispute was drafted, but was killed by the obstinacy of the United States Senate. A *modus vivendi* by which Canada conceded port rights on payment of a license fee thereupon went into force; its renewal from year to year eased the tension. The trade issue remained.

The Liberals were expected to be more sympathetic. As the party in opposition, new causes would make more appeal to them than to the defenders of the *status quo*. They had also more leaning toward freer trade. True, there were distinctly protectionist strains in the party, particularly in the Quebec representation, and the party attitude as a whole for twenty years

had been that of moderate or incidental protection. Yet they included, particularly among those members closely in touch with British movements, a minority who denounced protection as an economic fallacy and a source of political corruption. There were many signs of a drift toward commercial union in the Liberal ranks, when the new leader made his first official pronouncement at Somerset.

Mr. Laurier declared that the country was discontented and disillusioned, and he agreed that protection had not fulfilled its glowing promises. Yet he warned his followers against precipitate adoption of the first alternative proposed:

The reaction has come, gentlemen; it began in the province of Ontario; it has not stopped within moderate bounds; on the contrary it has gone to extremes, and at this very hour, the great majority of the farmers of Ontario are clamouring for commercial union with the United States, that is to say, the suppression of all customs duties between the two countries. . . . We know that there is to-day in the United States a group of men determined upon giving us commercial union. . . . If I am asked at present for my own opinion, I may say that for my part I am not ready to declare that commercial union is an acceptable idea. I am not ready, for my part, to state that commercial union should be adopted at the present moment.

But though not prepared to endorse commercial union, Mr. Laurier was unhesitatingly in favour of closer and friendlier trade relations with the United States: "At the bottom of the commercial union idea, badly defined, was the conviction of the Canadian people that any kind of reciprocity with the people of the

United States would be to the advantage of the people of Canada." Reciprocity had always been a Liberal goal. The government had made futile attempts to force reciprocity by a retaliatory customs and fisheries policy. "I may say—and it is my actual policy—that the time has come to abandon the policy of retaliation followed thus far by the Canadian government, to show the American people that we are brothers, and to hold out our hands to them, with a due regard for the duties we owe to our mother country."

As to "commercial union with Great Britain, which has been suggested as an alternative to commercial union with the United States," he would say the same thing, "that the project was hazy and indefinite: certainly if it were realizable, and all our interests were protected, I would accept a commercial treaty of that nature." A more immediate possibility would be commercial treaties with other parts of the Empire: what would be easier than to have a commercial treaty with the Australian continent? "I believe that idea is good and fair and that it will eventually triumph."

If the new leader stood aloof, some of the old lieutenants were prepared to rush in. Sir Richard Cartwright, speaking in October at Ingersoll, flatly declared for commercial union. No other way of escape seemed possible. Granted, there was a risk, but it was a choice of risks:

I have no hesitation in saying frankly that if the United States are willing to deal with us on equitable terms the advantages to both countries, and especially to us, are so great

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that scarcely any sacrifice is too severe to secure them. I am as averse as any man can be to annexation or to resign our political independence, but I cannot shut my eyes to the facts. We have greatly misused our advantages, we have been foolish in our expenditures, we have no means of satisfying the just demands of large portions of the Dominion, except through such an arrangement as commercial union. In the present temper of Manitoba and the Maritime provinces, any failure or refusal to secure free trade with the United States is much more likely to bring about just such a political crisis as these parties affect to dread than even the very closest commercial connection that can be conceived.

John Charlton took the same stand. Mills showed sympathy with it. Lesser lights followed.

In Ontario, and on a trade issue, Cartwright as yet carried more weight in the Liberal party than Laurier. Yet the majority of the party preferred the new leader's more cautious policy. James D. Edgar contributed materially to this conclusion by a series of open letters to Mr. Wiman, in which he urged that abolition of the custom-houses along the border was not essential to ensure a very wide, even an unrestricted measure of reciprocity; neither in 1854, nor in Brown's treaty of 1874, which provided for a much greater range of free commodities, were uniform tariffs on the coast or the abolition of tariffs along the border proposed. A declaration from the interprovincial conference which met in Quebec in the same month definitely marked out unrestricted reciprocity rather than commercial union as the Liberal policy. The conference, which comprised representatives from the Liberal administrations of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward

Island, of the coalition government in New Brunswick, and the Conservative government of Manitoba, unani- mously adopted a resolution to the effect that un- restricted reciprocity would be of advantage to all the provinces of the Dominion, would strengthen rather than weaken British connection, and, with the settle- ment of the fisheries dispute, would ease the strain in the relations between the mother country and the United States.

When parliament met in 1888, the trade question overshadowed all other issues. A Liberal caucus was called, to define the party's attitude. 'Commercial union had its vigorous advocates, but they were in a small minority. The great majority were not prepared to risk the experiment of joint tariffs. Yet the minor- ity were strong enough to secure a very sweeping phras- ing in the reciprocity resolution which Sir Richard Cart- wright moved on March 14. He demanded no less than complete free trade between the United States and Canada in all manufactured and natural products of the two countries. In a powerful speech Cartwright deplored the slow growth of Canada, demonstrated that the United States was her natural and incomparable market, insisted that this market could not be secured save on generous and sweeping terms of reciprocity, and met charges of disloyalty to Britain by asserting that Canada's chief mission was to reconcile Britain and the United States and denying that in any case Canada owed England more than Christian forgive- ness for the blunders of her diplomats.



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He was well supported. Louis H. Davies analyzed the government's policy; John Charlton surveyed in detail the possibilities of trade with the republic; Alfred Jones exposed the failure of protection to build up inter-provincial trade; William Paterson argued that legitimate manufacturing interests would gain, not lose; David Mills insisted that the failure of the N. P. after a ten-year trial called for a change; William Mulock emphasized the importance of geography in determining world trade and the precedent England had set of putting her own interests first. They did not have matters their own way. Thomas White attacked Liberal inconsistencies and stressed the revenue difficulty; George Foster contended that the physical barriers to Canadian unity were merely opportunities for calling forth a people's effort; Charles Tupper insisted that the United States was not prepared to trade on fair terms; J. A. Chapleau found Canada abounding in prosperity, and the minor prophets drummed on disloyalty and direct taxation.

The debate had dragged on for more than two weeks, when Mr. Laurier took part. He declared that the National Policy had failed to force reciprocity, had failed to build up interprovincial trade, had failed to develop the promised home market. Modern conditions of large-scale production made it imperative to broaden markets in order to reduce overhead and lessen costs. If the interests of farmers and of manufacturers clashed, he would stand by the basic and essential industry. But their interests did not necessarily clash; manu-

facturers with brains and energy would, like the farmers, gain from the wider outlet. As to the effect upon England, while considerations of sentiment had given him much concern; "while with all my soul I say, let my tongue adhere to the roof of my mouth if it were ever to speak an unkind word of England," yet this was a question of duty not of sentiment: "if I have to choose between the duty I owe to England and the duty I owe to my native land, I stand by my native land. . . . It is quite possible that John Bull will grumble, but in his grumbling there will be as much pride as anger, and John Bull will feel flattered if there is an offspring of his so much like the old gentleman that he will not lose any occasion to turn an honest penny." He would like to be able to make a similar bargain with England, but given England's free-trade policy, that was out of the question. It might be that the resolution would be defeated, but the cause would go on. Giving even to a tariff issue a touch of imagination, Laurier concluded:

We are to-day in the last days of a long and severe winter. . . . Nature, which is now torpid and inert, will awaken in a few days under the penetrating influence of a warmer sun, and the great river at the foot of the cliff on which we stand, now imprisoned in the close embrace of frost, will throw off her shackles and roll unfettered and free toward the sea. So sure as this will happen, I say that under the penetrating influence of discussion, of better feelings on both sides of the line, the hostility which now stains our long frontier will disappear, the barriers which now obstruct trade will be burst open, and trade will pour in along all the avenues from

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the north to the south and from the south to the north, free, untrammelled and no longer stained by the hues of hostility.

When on April 9 the debate ended, the government was sustained by its full majority—124 to 67. But the Opposition had put its case. In the three years before the next election it could drive it home. The river would roll to the sea. But unfortunately for their forecasts, there proved to be many an eddy and cross current. Before the year was out, the good ship *Reciprocity* was making heavy weather. In November, 1888, the United States elections brought the defeat of Cleveland and Bayard and the triumph of a Republican party once more committed to high protection. In Canada itself the Jesuits' Estates agitation had diverted public interest from trade to creed. With Protestantism in danger (and fortunately from a Liberal provincial premier), reciprocity could be side-tracked. The "Mail" itself was at once in full cry down the Jesuit trail, and grew lukewarm on its old gospel. It was in vain that Goldwin Smith made light of its defection: "What happens the tree when the bird which has lighted on a twig flies away?" For the moment, the trade issue took a very secondary place.

The disposition of the Jesuits' Estates had been for many a year a thorny question with which few politicians had cared to grapple. The Society of Jesus had had a chequered career in Canada. In the early days of New France, the courage, the unselfish devotion, the crowning martyrdom of members of the order, and in some cases the capacity for political manœuvring, had

given the society prestige and power and in time wide acres, the gift of the State or of private benefactors. During the last years of the French régime in Canada, the Jesuits throughout the world were falling on evil days; one Catholic sovereign after another, alarmed by their political intrigues and their growth in wealth and assertiveness, expelled them from his dominions. When the leading Protestant power became master of the destinies of New France, it was therefore not surprising that proposals were made for suppressing the order and confiscating its estates. Whether by force of the application of the laws of England at the time of the Conquest, or of the proclamation of the King in 1791 suppressing the order in Canada, or by escheat after the death in 1800 of the last surviving Canadian member, the Crown took title and control of the estates. Lord Amherst, and after his death, his heirs, sought the estates as recompense for military service, but in spite of sundry promises, the grant was not made. The situation was complicated by the fact that in 1773 Pope Clement XIV had decreed the suppression of the society; it was contended that by ecclesiastical usage and the civil law of New France, any corporate property fell in such case to the ordinaries of the diocese, the bishops of Quebec and Montreal. In 1831 the estates, still segregated, were conveyed as a trust to the province of Canada for purposes of education; with Confederation they passed to Quebec. In the meantime, the Jesuits had come back to the scene of their early trials and triumphs. Pius VII

had raised the ban in 1814. In 1842, at the instance of Bishop Bourget, a number of Jesuit priests came to the diocese of Montreal; ten years later a Jesuit school, St. Mary's College, was incorporated by the province of Canada, only seven members opposing and twenty-five Catholic and twenty-nine Protestant members supporting. They became a teaching order solely; a generation later, as Sir John Macdonald noted, there was not a single parish in Quebec that had a Jesuit as its curé. In the ecclesiastical and political controversies of the sixties and seventies, members of the order were Bishop Bourget's most able and most aggressive supporters. When their position was more assured, they began to revive their claims to the old estates, but not only did ministers of state turn a deaf ear, Gédéon Ouimet, prime minister in 1874, protesting to Rome that the question was closed and that the arguing of the Jesuit claims would only stir passion and fanaticism, and all in vain, but Archbishop Taschereau and the greater part of the ecclesiastical authorities opposed, pressing the counter-claims of the dioceses and of Laval University.

When Honoré Mercier became premier, a new chapter opened. Mercier had been educated in St. Mary's College, and had a fervent sympathy with his old teachers. His political alliance with the ultramontane wing of the Conservatives had carried him far from the old Rouge traditions. He did not create the issue, but neither did he run away from it. He was honestly convinced that the Society of Jesus had moral,

though no legal rights. He found the peace of the province disturbed by the controversy, and the title to the estates so clouded in the public estimation that they could not be sold or leased at their proper value. His worst enemies never accused Mercier of lack of courage, nor of lack of astuteness. When he determined to settle the question, he laid his plans shrewdly and pressed ahead regardless of opposition. The first step was to reconstitute the order as a legal entity. In 1887 he introduced a bill to incorporate the Society of Jesus. Mgr. Taschereau, now America's first cardinal, opposed the bill. The Jesuits suggested a compromise,—to give them the right to establish schools only in those dioceses whose bishops gave consent. Mgr. Hamel, acting on behalf of the cardinal, agreed, but a moment later declared that in so doing he had exceeded his mandate. But Mercier seized the opening, accepted the amendment, and pushed the bill through: every man, he declared, venerated Cardinal Taschereau, but that was no reason for committing injustice, crushing the little to exalt the great; if there were difficulties between the ecclesiastical authorities and the Jesuits, that was for the Holy See to judge; if the legislature granted further delay, in order to enable all the bishops to agree, well, he had the most profound respect for the venerable prelates, but he could not help remarking that if they waited till all were in agreement they would wait a long time.

The next step was to reconcile the conflicting claims to the estates. Mercier insisted that if the province

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was to make any payment, it must secure a complete discharge. Protracted negotiations in Rome and in Quebec led to a settlement which was embodied in an act which Mercier introduced into the legislature in June, 1888. The sum of \$400,000, much below the value of the estates, was to be paid to ecclesiastical authorities in the province, to be designated later by the Pope, and in return a complete renunciation of any further claims was to be given; until so validated, the settlement was not to take effect; to compensate Protestant schools, which had received a share of the revenue from the estates, the sum of \$80,000 was to be granted them, to be distributed by the Protestant Committee of the Council of Instruction. The bill passed with scarcely a ripple of dissent. The Montreal "Witness" deplored it in a moderate editorial; a Protestant member of the legislature mildly questioned its expediency, but not a vote was cast against it.

The calm did not long continue. Militant Protestants in Ontario could not permit their weak-kneed brethren in Quebec to sell their birthright for a little silver and a quiet life. The "Mail" began the crusade: "If the British and Protestant element in Quebec will not save itself, we must try to save it for our own sakes." Other journals took up the cry; preachers denounced Mercier from the pulpit; Orange lodges passed fiery resolutions; sober law journals found the Act of Supremacy in danger; Toronto held the usual mass meetings; in Quebec itself some Protestant opposition was roused. A cry rose for disallowance.

The Ottawa government had used its veto power to protect the vested interests of lumbermen in Ontario and railway corporations in the West; why not to save all Canada from papist aggression? Was a Canadian legislature to be permitted not merely to revive the old connection between Church and State, not merely to select for state endowment the organization which to fervid Protestants was the incarnation of unscrupulous perfidy and aggressive intrigue, but to call in the Pope of Rome to validate a statute of a British parliament, and to flourish in the preamble a statement "that the Pope allows the Government to retain the proceeds of the Jesuits' Estates as a special deposit to be disposed of hereafter with the sanction of the Holy See"? After much balancing, the "Globe" joined the hue and cry, and Ontario's demand for disallowance rang as loud as Quebec's outcry against the hanging of Riel.

Mercier was accused of raising the issue for party gain. The charge does not seem justified. The question was pressing; it was in the interest of the province to have it settled; the settlement was fair and reasonable in itself. The action of the Pope was invoked, not to validate the statute, but to ensure that all the claimants would be bound by the settlement and the province given a complete discharge. In some of the documents contained in the lengthy preamble the ecclesiastical assumptions of authority were unfortunate, but Mercier had not accepted them. Yet he was always prepared to draw from any situation the last ounce



of political advantage it could be made to yield, and if, by disallowing the measure, Macdonald would present him with a valuable grievance and a solid Quebec, then federal intervention would have a very decided silver lining.

Macdonald was as well aware of the possibilities as Mercier. His position was not made easier by the fact that in the past he had insistently urged and used the veto power upon provincial legislation. He faced a divided party, or rather warring lieutenants. The Jesuits' Estates controversy and its sequels became in large measure duels between two aspirants for the Conservative leadership, Sir John Thompson and D'Alton McCarthy. McCarthy, born in Dublin in 1836, had come to Canada as a child; when he grew to manhood he became one of the leaders of the Ontario bar and a champion of ultra-Protestantism. A hard rider, a lavish spender, delighting in hospitality, a bold fighter, McCarthy had in him no little of the Irish squire of Charles Lever's day. He had entered parliament in 1876, and had been Macdonald's chief support in the attempts to limit provincial authority. It was not as a constitutional lawyer that he made his place, but as a popular tribune; a powerful and incisive speaker, master of contagious emotion, surpassed in Ontario only by Macdonald himself in his note of distinction and personal appeal, D'Alton McCarthy was a force to reckon with. Thompson, also of Irish parentage, was born in Nova Scotia in 1844; quietly and inevitably he made his way to the front, reporter, lawyer, leader of the bar, at-

torney-general of the province, premier for two months, judge for three years, and then called to Ottawa in 1885 as Minister of Justice. The post had been offered to McCarthy, who declined it, but none the less resented the sudden rise of this newcomer in federal politics. Thompson made his place at once in the larger field. His habits of concentration and of unending labour, his power of exhaustive analysis and crystal exposition, his solid judgment and unbending integrity, brought all men's respect. He lacked McCarthy's touch of fire; he was outwardly cold, though on occasions breaking into passionate defence of his own conduct or violent and unpardonable criticism of his opponents (as when during Mercier's 1887 campaign he spoke of "the blasphemous Mr. Mercier and the traitor Mr. Laurier"). It was not merely in temperament the rivals differed, but in creed. Thompson was not merely a Roman Catholic; brought up a Methodist, he had joined the Roman Catholic Church at the age of twenty-seven, and had thereby doubly exposed himself to sectarian suspicion. In a country where religious prejudices were so easily aroused, a convert from Protestantism was under a handicap which only outstanding ability and unquestioned character could overcome.

With the reassembling of parliament in February, 1889, the controversy came to a head. After some preliminary questionings, Colonel O'Brien moved an address demanding disallowance of an act which violated the principle of separation of Church and State, rec-

ognized the usurpation of a foreign authority, and threatened the civil and religious liberties of the people of Canada by the endowment of an alien secret society proved guilty everywhere of intolerant and mischievous intermeddling in state affairs. His unexpectedly able survey of the case was reinforced by the efforts of a militant group of Ontario members. John E. Barron made an elaborate attack on the constitutionality of the act. Clarke Wallace devoted himself to justifying the original confiscation of the estates: there was no wrong to be righted. Alexander McNeill delved still deeper into history, portraying the Jesuits as unscrupulous intriguers and fomenters of strife in the past and unrepentant in the present. John Charlton gave a detailed historical summary of the action of the the British and Canadian authorities in the matter. D'Alton McCarthy concluded with a slashing indictment of scheming Jesuits, spineless Protestants, and calculating governments. But for all their vigour and the thunderings of their supporters outside the walls, the advocates of disallowance could rally only thirteen votes, all but one from Ontario, nine Conservatives and four Liberals. The weight of logic, of expediency, and of votes was against them. The main defence of the government fell to Thompson, who queried the original confiscation, denied there was any assumption now of papal authority, and defended the competence of the provincial legislature to make any settlement it pleased. David Mills, from the Op-

position benches, strongly reinforced Thompson's convincing handling of the historical and constitutional phases; C. C. Colby, speaking as a Quebec Protestant, praised the tolerance of the Catholic majority and the service of the Catholic Church as a bulwark of Conservatism, a barrier against anarchical assaults upon all authority; Macdonald expressed his regret over an agitation which would divide and imperil the country, to no avail.

Laurier's position had never been in doubt. The disallowance agitation ran counter to every principle of his political faith. He announced his intention of supporting the government, and congratulated Macdonald on coming at last to a sound position on the question of provincial rights. The agitation in the country was the result of the government's long disregard of provincial rights, a retribution for the Conservative party's pandering to sectional prejudice. But it was not merely on constitutional grounds that he opposed disallowance. Mercier's measure was a just and courageous settlement, accepted by Catholic and Protestant alike. The Jesuits had been condemned too recklessly; whatever their history in other lands,—and if they had often been expelled, they had never been expelled from a free country,—here their record had been full of honour. They had been the pioneers of the country; every inch of the soil of Ontario was trodden by their weary feet at least a hundred and fifty years before there was an English settler in that province; nay, the very soil of the province had been

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consecrated by their blood, shed in their attempts to win souls to the God of Protestants and Catholics alike. Mr. McCarthy had insisted that this was a British country and that the people of Quebec too often forgot the Conquest. What did he mean? Mr. Charlton had added that there should be but one race here (McCarthy: "Hear, Hear!"). Well, what would that race be? Is it the British lion that is to swallow the French lamb, or the French lamb that is to swallow the British lion? There can be more than one race, but there shall be but one nation. Scotland has not forgotten her origin, but Scotland is British. I do not intend to forget my origin, but I am a Canadian before anything. "Liberty," he concluded in an illuminating phrase, "shines not only for the friends of liberty but also for the enemies of liberty."

In the House of Commons, the attack on the Jesuits' Estates Act was defeated by an overwhelming vote, 188 to 13. In the country, the agitation mounted higher. An Equal Rights Association was organized in Toronto in June, 1889, to guard against "the political encroachments of ultramontaniam." The "noble thirteen" were the heroes of an Ontario hour. Conservative politicians, realizing too late the dangers of the movement, sought to divert it against the Liberal administration in Ontario. Mowat was attacked for his friendly relations with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and particularly for permitting the use of French in the elementary schools of eastern Ontario, where the early French-Canadian settlers were now being strongly

reinforced by migration from Quebec to fill the gap left by the westward and cityward drift of the Scots of Glengarry and the English-speaking folk of the adjoining counties. But it was in the federal arena that the contest mainly waged, and here McCarthy, with strong clerical and lay backing, pressed forward to new goals in his onslaught on "French-Canadian domination," by which he meant "French-Canadian equality." It is worth noting, as indicative of the distinctly racial basis of the imperial-federation movement, its emphasis on British ties of blood, that the leaders of the noble thirteen were leaders in the imperialist movement; D'Alton McCarthy was the first president of the Imperial Federation League in Canada, Alexander McNeill its first vice-president, Colonel O'Brien, Colonel Tyrwhitt, and Clarke Wallace members of the first general committee and Colonel Denison a little later its moving spirit.

Laurier watched the rising tide of racial strife with keen disappointment. The reconciliation of the two races, on a basis of full and fair and equal partnership in the development of their common country, was the object nearest his heart. The agitation was injuring the Conservative party more than his own, but that did not cool his anger against the fomenters of strife, nor lessen his efforts to stay the tide. Alike in Quebec and in Ontario, he took every occasion to break down old prejudices and emphasize their common Canadianism.

In June, 1889, at the St. Jean-Baptiste celebration

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in the city of Quebec, where twenty-five thousand people had gathered to witness the unveiling of monuments to Jacques Cartier and Brébeuf, Laurier, after a glowing tribute to the splendid and storied city, made the burden of his speech an appeal for a wider patriotism, a rivalry in tolerance and generous understanding:

We are French-Canadians, but our country is not confined to the territory overshadowed by the citadel of Quebec; our country is Canada, it is all that is covered by the British flag on the American continent. . . . Our fellow-countrymen are not only those in whose veins runs the blood of France. They are all those, whatever their race or whatever their language, whom the fortune of war, the chances of fate or their own choice have brought among us and who acknowledge the sovereignty of the British Crown. . . . The rights of my fellow-countrymen of different origins are as dear to me, as sacred to me, as the rights of my own race. . . . What I claim for ourselves is an equal place in the sun, an equal share of justice, of liberty; that share we have; we have it amply and what we claim for ourselves we are anxious to grant to others. . . .

I am not ignorant of the fact that there can be no nation without a national pride, nor am I unaware that in almost all cases national pride is inspired by those tragic events which bring suffering and tears in their train, but which at the same time call out all the forces of a nation or of a race. . . . Our history under Confederation presents none of the dramatic events which make us so attached to the past; it has been calm and consequently happy. But peace has also its glories and its heroes. Canada under Confederation has produced men of whom any nation might justly feel proud. I will not speak of the Canadians of French origin, as Mr. Langelier referred to them a moment ago, but I will allude to the Canadians of British origin and mention two as examples. The

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first name I shall recall is that of a man from whom I differ *toto caelo*, but I am too much a French-Canadian not to glory at all times in doing justice to an adversary. I refer to Sir John Macdonald. I will not astonish my friend, Mr. Chapais, whom I see among us, if I state that I do not share Sir John Macdonald's political opinions. I may even add that I condemn almost all of them, but it must be acknowledged that in his long career Sir John Macdonald has displayed such eminent qualities that he would have made his mark on any of the world's stages, and that with the single exception perhaps of Mr. Mercier, no one on this continent has excelled as he has in the art of governing men. The other name is that of a man who has been to me not only a friend, but more than a friend,—I mean Hon. Edward Blake. Some years ago, speaking here of Mr. Blake, I declared that in my opinion America did not possess his equal and Europe could not show his superior. That opinion has been confirmed by all I have since seen of Mr. Blake. I have enjoyed the advantage of very close relations with him, and have learned that his heart, soul and character are in keeping with his splendid intellect. . . .

But it was not merely to Quebec he spoke. He was eager to stem the tide of misrepresentation in Ontario. To most party men that appeared dangerous and quixotic tactics. Why intervene in a controversy wherein the Conservative party was the chief sufferer? Was it wise for a Liberal leader, newly in the saddle, little known in Ontario, suspected in many quarters because of his French and Catholic origin, to speak unnecessarily on so delicate a question? The cautions did not shake Laurier's purpose. His followers were to learn that, once leader, he meant to lead, and that popular hostility would rarely move him when he had once taken a stand. He believed that it was



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good for Canada to seek to explain away sectional misunderstandings, and that what was good for Canada could not be harmful for the Liberal party.

Through the Young Men's Liberal Club of Toronto, arrangements were made for a meeting in that city on September 30, 1889. Laurier faced a large and by no means a wholly sympathetic crowd. He plunged into the question of the hour. Canada was rent by distrust and hostility, a distrust due in great part to the constant appeal of the Conservative party to local prejudice. The duty of Liberals was plain: to develop mutual respect and confidence, to resist disintegration. Certainly, Confederation was not the last word of Canada's destiny; it was simply a transient state, but whenever the change came it must be a step forward, not a step backward. He opposed fantastic dreams of an independent French-Canadian state on the St. Lawrence; equally he opposed attempts to destroy all that French-Canadians held dear: "Men there are amongst you to tell you that it is dangerous to Confederation that the French language should be spoken in this great country of ours. Well, Mr. Chairman, I am a French-Canadian; I was brought up on the knees of a French mother, and my first recollections are those recollections which no man ever forgets; and shall it be denied to me, the privilege of addressing the same language to those that are dear to me?" As for the Jesuits' Estates Act (here wild uproar), it effected a needed settlement. The charge that the Pope's civil supremacy was recognized was nonsense; any such at-

tempt would be treason and so dealt with. Should liberty be refused the Jesuits because they might abuse it? That was not the principle of British Liberalism; that was the doctrine of French and of German Liberals, who fought fire with fire. If Ultramontanes in Canada conspired against our liberties, we would fight them as we had done before. In any case, the power of disallowance was alien to the spirit of a federal union, a source of friction and discontent. The advocacy of imperial federation in Conservative quarters was an evidence that even Conservatives were not content with things as they were. He did not believe in that device; what was wanted was an economic, not a political reform, unrestricted free trade with the United States, the forerunner of commercial alliance among all the English-speaking peoples. But above all, more than prosperity they needed trust, confidence, a better opinion one of the other.

It cannot be said that Mr. Laurier wholly converted his audience. Honest conviction and stubborn prejudice were too strong for a single speech, however eloquent and sincere, to overcome. Many of the older Liberals, including the very canny premier of Ontario, were careful to avoid any endorsement of his utterances. Yet the straightforward, courageous, friendly appeal awoke response, and undoubtedly did much to keep the agitation within bounds, if it did not for the moment make the Liberal leader's own position any easier.

McCarthy returned to the fray the following session. In February, 1890, he introduced a bill to abolish the

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use of the French language in the legislature and courts of the North-West territories. In 1875 the Mackenzie government had provided a framework of government for the wildernesses between Manitoba and the Rockies, based on the gradual replacement of an appointive council by an elective assembly as settlement grew. The Act of 1875 permitted the use of either English or French in the debates of Council or Assembly and in the courts, and required the printing of all legislative records, journals, and ordinances in both languages. Into the Territories, as into Manitoba, there poured twenty English-speaking for one French-speaking settler, and the privileges of the handful of French-Canadians became of little practical moment. McCarthy attacked them because they were within federal jurisdiction, and provided a good starting point for a wider campaign. The sting of the motion was found not in the tail but in the preamble: "It is expedient in the interest of the national unity of the Dominion that there should be community of language among the people of Canada." Such a preamble, backed by a speech emphasizing the necessity of uniformity of language for national unity, involved interests much more momentous than the printing of the sessional papers at Pile-of-Bones.

The week of the debate was tense and full of unsettling rumours. McCarthy found little direct support: none outside of the original thirteen, but there was much finessing as to the degree of opposition to be offered. Save for a bitter and aggressive retort from

Langevin, and an unusually vigorous and moving plea for tolerance from Macdonald, and for McCarthy's own addresses, his closing being much more moderate than his opening speech, the outstanding contributions came from the Liberal side, from Mills, Mulock, Davies, from Blake, who had made his first speech in two years a week before, and from Laurier.

Laurier declared that were it only the use of French in the North-West that was in question, he would be inclined to say, let the measure pass and let us back to real work. But avowedly the present movement was only a preliminary skirmish. In his public addresses before parliament opened McCarthy had made clear his plan of campaign in words which he dared not repeat in the House; he had denounced French-Canadians as a "bastard nationality," had urged his hearers to buckle on their armour: "This is a British country, and the sooner we take up our French-Canadians and make them British, the less trouble will we leave for posterity." The ban was to be extended throughout Canada. Such a policy was folly, anti-Canadian, un-British, a national crime. The existence of the two races was a fact, a divergence that sometimes led to friction, but might be made a source of strength. The difficulty could not be solved by the Tory method, by following the fatal example of English statesmen who for seven hundred years had attempted to make Ireland British, not by justice and generosity but by violence and oppression, and had failed. It could be solved only by mutual respect. The humil-

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iation of a race or creed was a poor foundation for national strength.

Certainly no one can respect or admire more than I do the Anglo-Saxon race; I have never disguised my sentiments on that point, but we of French origin are satisfied to be what we are and we claim no more. I claim this for the race in which I was born that though it is not perhaps endowed with the same qualities as the Anglo-Saxon race, it is endowed with qualities as great; I claim for it that it is endowed with qualities unsurpassed in some respects; I claim for it that there is not to-day under the sun a more moral, more honest or more intellectual race, and if the honourable gentleman came to Lower Canada, it would be my pride to take him to one of those ancient parishes on the St. Lawrence or one of its tributaries, and show him a people to whom, prejudiced as he is, he could not but apply the words which the poet applied to those who at one time inhabited the Basin of Minas and the meadows of Grandpré:

Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodland,  
Darkened by shadows of earth but reflecting an image of Heaven."

Mr. McCarthy had appealed to Lord Durham's authority to support his intolerance; a greater statesman than Durham, Robert Baldwin, and the whole trend of Canadian history, proved the folly of force.

The amendment offered by Mr. Beausoleil, confirming the existing arrangement, was supported by every French-speaking member in the House except Chapleau, but received only scattering votes outside Quebec. After much jockeying, an amendment moved by Thompson in which Blake had collaborated, denying that uniformity of language was expedient, but permitting the legislature of the North-West power to determine the language question for itself so far as concerned

its own proceedings and records, was adopted by 117 to 63, the minority consisting of the two extreme wings.

Once more the appeal to racial and sectarian prejudice had been foiled, but the end was not yet. Already a tour of McCarthy through Manitoba had led to the emergence of another sectarian issue, the Manitoba school question. It did not come to a head for several years, but it threatened the peace of the country from the beginning.

These seemingly endless bickerings made Laurier's position extremely difficult. When pressed to take the leadership, he had stood out because of the prejudices against a French-speaking and Roman Catholic chief which he knew to exist in Ontario. Since his assumption of control, the country had been rent by one bitter controversy after another. He had not raised these issues, he had not aggravated them, he had on the contrary striven in public and in private, among his opponents and among his followers, to allay them. Yet the fact remained that among the rank and file in Ontario there were not a few who felt that at such a time the leadership of the defender of Riel and the ally of Mercier was a handicap.

The position was rendered still more difficult by the sudden reappearance of Edward Blake. For two sessions his voice had not been heard in the House. Now he returned and threw himself with his old vigour and commanding presence into the debates and the framing of policy. Soon rumours arose that he was about to resume the leadership. Conservative journals, as in

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duty bound, fanned the report. Not without guile, Macdonald, during the North-West dual-language debate, addressed to Blake rather than to Laurier an appeal to help in working out a joint solution, and Blake without hesitation agreed. Here and there a Liberal newspaper, particularly the Dundas "Banner," confessed that it would prefer the old leader.<sup>1</sup>

Blake's position was quite as embarrassing as Laurier's. No matter what his good-will and disinterested desire for the party's success, it was not easy for a man who had for years been the unquestioned leader and who still was rightly conscious of great powers, to take a second place. If Macgregor sat down at all, there would be the head of the table. It cannot be said that the relations between the old leader and the new were cordial in these years. There had been no question of the warm and loyal admiration of Laurier for the older man, no question of Blake's recognition of the younger man's powers. On virtually every issue they had stood together. That Blake had been absolutely sincere in wishing to retire and in urging Laurier as his permanent successor, Laurier had no doubt. Yet as time went on he was convinced that with returning health and reviving interest in affairs Blake had repented of his too rash withdrawal. No word passed, but Blake's acts spoke for themselves. For three years he scarcely lifted a hand to help the

<sup>1</sup> At a banquet in honour of Honoré Mercier, in Montreal, July 2, a prominent Liberal, Mr. Greenshields, declared: "To-day the Liberal party control all the provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and if they would only unite, victory would be theirs, under whatever leader was chosen, Mr. Blake or Mr. Laurier."

new leader or his old party. Time after time Laurier went to him for counsel, but went in vain. As Laurier himself summed it up later; "In the session of 1888 Blake was not in parliament, having gone to Europe for his health; in the session of 1889 he was present but gave no aid; in the session of 1890 he gave a little more but hindered as much as he helped." In some measure Blake's aloofness was undoubtedly due to a wish not to embarrass the new leader.

An instance of the difficulties created by the presence in the House of two Liberal leaders may be cited. When in the session of 1890 serious charges of corruption were brought against a Conservative member, Rykert, it was agreed at a council in which Blake, Cartwright, Mills, and M. C. Cameron, with Laurier, took part, to move for Rykert's expulsion. Cartwright made the motion; Blake turned to Laurier: "I can turn my speech either way, for expulsion or for a committee of enquiry." "But you cannot do that," Laurier replied; "it was settled at committee." Just then Blake had to rise; he ended a strong speech by suggesting a committee. Sir John Thompson, the government leader, saw his chance and moved for a committee. Laurier had to think hard; he saw it was necessary to avert a split and to avoid humiliation for either Blake or Cartwright; he declared that while in his judgment Rykert's guilt was clear, as Cartwright had demonstrated, yet he had profound respect for such constitutional authorities as Blake and Thompson, and would accept a committee. Cartwright



looked daggers at both Blake and Laurier, and next day wrote a very wrathful letter. Laurier told Blake straightly that this was not the way to carry on a party. "Well, it seemed the best way." "No matter, it was not the way agreed upon in your presence: that was the time for question."

The situation clearly could not continue. Edward Blake could not play a secondary part in the House he long had dominated. No matter how loyal his feelings to Laurier, it was impossible for a man of his massive capacity, his habit of authority, his self-centredness, to remember always that he was now lieutenant, not captain. Nor was he at ease to see Cartwright leader for Ontario. It became clear that he must either resume the leadership or retire from parliament. Among the rank and file in the country, and particularly in Ontario, many would have welcomed his return to leadership. They knew his strength, his integrity, his moving power of speech, and he was an Ontario man born and bred; they did not yet know Laurier. Yet in the House of Commons there was little and rapidly lessening support for such a proposal. Every Liberal member still revered Blake, still recognized his incomparable powers of logic and of eloquence, but they had found a leader more after their own heart. Time only strengthened their devotion. Even had Blake desired to return, the members of the Liberal party in the Commons would have insisted upon the new leader holding his place.

In a letter to the "Globe" of July 3, 1890, Blake

made a circumspect denial of current rumour: "I am no more desirous to resume the leadership than I was to assume or retain it. My only wish is that the confidence and affection of Liberals of all shades may induce Mr. Laurier to hold the place he so admirably fills." Yet he was not prepared to give unqualified support to the policy on which the new leaders of the party had determined. When the next general election came, the hardest fought since Confederation, the Liberal party had no aid from its old chieftain.

The general election which was held early in March, 1891, came before it was expected. The parliament elected in 1887 did not expire until 1892. When the fourth session ended in May, 1890, it was understood that another session would be held before dissolution. There was, in fact, a definite pledge to this effect. The election act of 1887 had provided for an annual revision of the voters' lists, but during the session of 1890 the secretary of state had sought and secured authority from parliament to omit the revision of that year on the ground that the taking of the census in 1891 would involve redistribution and make an earlier revision a useless expense, adding that no election would be held before the lists were drawn up in June, 1891. The internal condition of the Conservative party made it seem in any case prudent to defer the day of reckoning. The duel between McCarthy and Thompson, the triangular vendetta between Langevin, Caron, and Chapleau, warranted delay, that time might heal or patch the breaches and fortune bring a rallying issue.

But later other arguments prevailed. The rising tide of reciprocity sentiment, the threat of Tarte's revelations of corruption, the exigencies of the Canadian Pacific, and his own failing health, made Sir John Macdonald decide to face the electors in the winter of 1890-91.

Reciprocity was once more a foremost issue. Trade was still depressed in Canada and markets sluggish. The victory of the Republicans in the United States in 1888 had seemed to end hope of freer trade. The measure in which they embodied their campaign pledges, the McKinley Act of 1890, put in force the most prohibitive tariff since the Civil War, the *reductio ad absurdum* of protection. In order to convince the doubting farmers that protection held favour for farm as well as factory, the act imposed heavy duties on agricultural products. Whether so intended or not, the high duties threatened to shut out altogether such Canadian exports, butter, eggs, barley, hay, live stock, as had hitherto succeeded in surmounting the tariff walls. In many quarters the McKinley Act stirred deep resentment and killed all desire for closer trade relations. That this did not become the general attitude was due to signs that the Republicans had overshot the mark. The Congressional elections of November, 1890, gave the Democrats control of the House, on a platform of lower tariff, and within the Republican party itself a progressive wing, under Blaine, sought to temper protection by reciprocity, though as yet it was to Latin America, not to Canada, they turned.

Confirmed by these indications in the belief that a reciprocal lowering of tariffs was after all possible, and with Jesuits and French sessional papers losing some of their red-herring power, rural Ontario and later rural Quebec swung distinctly against the government. Macdonald's scouts along the St. Lawrence reported that reciprocity sentiment was growing rapidly among the farmers and advised an early appeal to the country.

Israel Tarte's revelations of the rottenness in Langevin's Department of Public Works reinforced this view. Tarte, a Bleu of the Bleus, the government's most vigorous and most audacious journalistic supporter in Quebec, had long been aware of rumours and suspicions against Langevin's administration. Now the insensate jealousy and intriguing which marked the relations of the three Quebec leaders in the federal cabinet, and a quarrel among the members of a favoured clique of contractors, put the proofs of wrong-doing in his hands. He gave the proof to Macdonald, only to meet an airy rejection. Then he began to unfold his dossier in his journal, "Le Canadien," artistically and efficiently, lifting only one corner of the curtain at a time, keeping his victims in suspense, giving the impression of endless documents to follow, and turning the spear in the wound with a deft and practised hand. In the closing months of 1890 enough had been revealed to make it clear that Robert McGreevy, Conservative member for Quebec West, and for many years controller of the party's Quebec cam-

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paign chest, had made vast sums for himself, his associates, and his party funds, by utilizing his influence and his sources of secret information to secure for his partners luscious and lucrative contracts from the Department of Public Works. Langevin himself was not yet directly implicated, but rumour was busy with his name. It was certain that at the next session the Liberals would demand a searching investigation. Again, prudence urged an appeal to the electors before the curtain had been fully lifted.

Less known to the public, another factor was at work. The Canadian Pacific Railway had not yet managed to get out of politics. When construction was completed, and the demand for loans and subsidies ended, a new source of dispute and political agitation had arisen. The company insisted on a monopoly of through traffic in the West. The contract with the syndicate bound the federal government for twenty years not to charter any competing road between the company's main line and the United States border and to impose a similar policy upon any new province organized out of the Western Territories. The government went further and endeavoured to prevent Manitoba from chartering any competing company, though any such intention had been explicitly disavowed in 1881. Charter after charter of the Manitoba legislature was disallowed at Ottawa. The West rose in anger, insisted that not its sparse numbers nor its climate but soulless monopoly was responsible for the crushing rates on through and local traffic. The provin-

cial government renewed its charters, city boards of trade, farmers' unions, the press, and Conservative candidates denounced the policy of disallowance, and the struggle between the two governments reached the verge of armed conflict. Macdonald was compelled to give way. In 1888 the Canadian Pacific agreed to surrender its privileges, receiving in partial return a government guaranty of interest on bonds issued on the security of the land grant. Soon afterward the Northern Pacific crossed from Dakota into Manitoba, and, though rates did not fall as far as had been hoped, at least the settler knew henceforth that his ills were due to nature and geography and not to Stephen or Macdonald. It seemed that at last the company would be neither an issue nor a participant in an election campaign. Yet once more it was to be involved, and from a curious angle.

The Canadian Pacific, though carrying through the all-Canadian road north of Lake Superior, had not overlooked the advantages of a line south of the lake through American territory. During the construction of the main road it had built a branch from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario), which faces the peninsula jutting northeast between Superior and Michigan. Once the main enterprise was consolidated, the management prepared to enter this new territory, with its forest and mining wealth and with the fertile fields of Minnesota, in which their old friend Hill reigned supreme, beckoning them from beyond. In 1891 they acquired a controlling interest in the stock of two

United States roads, each a consolidation of many small lines, extending westward from Sault Ste. Marie (Michigan). The Duluth South Shore and Atlantic, as afterward completed, traversed the whole shore of the lake from the Sault to Superior. The Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Sault Ste. Marie connected the Sault with Minneapolis and eventually, through extensions and purchase of other roads or controlling interests, was to give the Canadian Pacific entry into Chicago and a connection between Minneapolis and the Canadian border.

To complete the transaction it was necessary to float nearly \$47,000,000 of securities in London. While the roads in question were not in Canada, and while the relations between the Canadian Pacific and the government had ended, the directors realized that an election in which the government would be defeated would be fatal to their plans, particularly with an unsettled money market. Years of political conflict had identified the railway and the Conservative party in the public mind, so that although as a matter of fact a Liberal victory would not have altered public policy toward the road in the slightest, it might have jeopardized the success of the new financing. Accordingly, in November, 1890, Stephen and Van Horne asked Macdonald whether or not there was an election in sight. He answered, no; not within ten or eleven months; he would go now, but no campaign funds were in sight.

In February, 1891, Mr. Laurier and Attorney-

General Longley of Nova Scotia were travelling from Montreal to New York, where they were to speak at a dinner given by the Board of Trade. Learning that Van Horne was on the same train, Laurier went into his car, where they chatted pleasantly till nearly midnight on matters far from railways or politics. Just as he was about to leave, Laurier turned to Van Horne; "I suppose, since you are in the secrets of the government, you can tell when the elections will be held." "I am not in the secrets of the government," Van Horne returned; "ask Sir John." "Well, then," Laurier replied, "I may give you some news: parliament will be dissolved before we return from New York."

Laurier went on to New York. He had planned to speak of the need of closer trade relations between Canada and the United States, but half-way through the banquet was brought to an abrupt end by the sudden death of one of the guests, Secretary of State Windom. Van Horne, though finding a melancholy satisfaction in the reflection that Windom's stroke had fallen on him immediately after a speech in which he had denounced the Canadian Pacific, had meanwhile had other matters to think of. He had been thunderstruck by Laurier's news. That night he could not sleep; in the morning he cabled Stephen in London. Stephen replied that the news was incredible; Laurier was not in the secrets of the government, and Macdonald's word had been given. Before the day was over they learned that the report was correct, and that Canada was soon to be in the throes of a general election. What was still



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more to the point, they learned in due time that their own necessities had been the argument that had turned the scale for dissolution. Macdonald had spoken to John Henry Pope of his promise to Stephen and Van Horne. Whereupon Pope replied: "That makes this just the time to bring on the election." "How 's that?" "The C. P. R. crowd simply can't let you lose, with all they have at stake; they will have to shell out as never before." The reasoning was irresistible.

On February 3 parliament was dissolved and the elections set for March 5. The campaign was brief, but it was the most bitterly contested since Confederation. The Opposition fought with a keenness sharpened by a dozen years' exclusion from power and with a hope rooted in the growing appeal of their trade policy. The government party fought with their backs to the wall, knowing their leader was dying, his lieutenants at odds, and their old party discredited. Desperation and in some cases an honest belief that the nation's or the Empire's safety was at stake, drove them to a campaign of personal abuse and flag-waving beyond Canadian precedent.

The government's first tactics were to cut the ground from under the Liberals by advocating a moderate measure of reciprocity. On January 16, there appeared in the Toronto "Empire" an inspired despatch from Ottawa stating that the Canadian government had been approached by the United States government with a view to the development of trade relations, and that the advice of the British government was being

sought. Thompson, in a public address on February 6, also implied that the overtures had come from the United States. Macdonald himself, recalling that "every measure of reciprocal trade we have got from our neighbours has been got by the Conservatives," declared that it would be possible to extend trade relations without infringing the national policy. These statements made it apparent not only that the Conservative party was prepared to negotiate a reciprocity treaty, but that the United States government, by taking the initiative, had made clear its readiness for a restricted measure of the Conservative type.

The announcements took the wind out of the Liberal sails. It was an audacious move, and as disreputable as it was audacious. Secretary Blaine at once denied that any negotiations were on foot, or that his government would entertain any scheme for reciprocity confined to natural products. The plain truth was that the United States had not taken the initiative, but that Canada, intervening in trade negotiations between the United States and Newfoundland, had formally proposed that all the issues between Canada and the United States, fisheries, coasting, and salvage laws, the Alaska boundary, and the renewal of the reciprocity treaty of 1854 with modifications and extensions, should be considered by a joint commission. Blaine's denial forced a change in tactics. As much as possible was made of the desirability of having any negotiations for reciprocity carried on by safe and moderate and loyal statesmen rather than by reckless politicians, annex-

ationists in disguise. But for the most part the emphasis shifted to the defence and glorification of the National Policy, and to attacks upon the disloyalty of the Opposition. "The old man, the old flag, and the old policy," the "Empire's" slogan, became the party's campaign cry.

The government was not content to seek to show that absorption in the United States would be the inevitable result of commercial union or, what they insisted was the same thing, unrestricted reciprocity. They tried to prove that Liberal leaders were hoping and working directly for annexation. The charge had no basis other than the heated imagination of self-righteous partisans, but repeated and reckless assertion had some effect. A tinge of colour was given the charge by the revelation of dubious intrigues by Edward Farrer. In the preceding summer Farrer had been engaged by the "Globe" as its chief editorial writer, Mr. John S. Willison becoming editor at about the same time. Proofs of a pamphlet which Farrer had written while on the "Mail" and which was being set up in a Toronto printing-shop, were stolen by a printer and put in the hands of Macdonald. It was not a patriotic production. Farrer outlined a policy whereby the United States might bring Canada to sue for annexation,—tonnage taxes on Nova Scotia fishing-vessels, suspension of the railway-bonding privilege, and so on. Macdonald revealed the pamphlet at a great meeting in Toronto, and charged the Liberal leaders with collusion. It was in vain that in signed statements in the columns of

the "Globe" next day Farrer assumed the sole responsibility for the pamphlet, which he declared had not been sent to Washington, and Mr. Willison reasserted the "Globe's" position of self-reliant Canadianism, or that the political leaders denied all knowledge. The fact that Farrer had been brought to the "Globe," after his tendencies had been publicly made known,<sup>1</sup> and that he was the close confidant of Sir Richard Cartwright, made the disclosures, and the publication later of correspondence between Wiman and Congressman Hitt, wherein Farrer was quoted as considering "not making two bites of a cherry but going for annexation at once," immensely damaging to the Liberal party.

Macdonald's manifesto to the electors was adroitly phrased to make the most of these tactics. He contrasted the steadfast adherence of the Conservatives to the National Policy with the vacillation of the Liberals on tariff issues, and the prosperity the country had enjoyed since 1878 with the soup-kitchens of the preceding régime. He brandished the awful bogey of direct taxation, necessary to meet the gap in revenue if unrestricted reciprocity were adopted, the elector "being called on by a Dominion tax-gatherer with a yearly demand for \$15.00 a family." Still worse, the Liberal policy would mean the surrender of Canadian

<sup>1</sup> The situation was made more embarrassing by the fact that only a year before, when Farrer was still the chief writer on the rival "Mail," the "Globe" had charged him with having secretly urged a committee of the United States Senate to block reciprocity or any settlement of the Fisheries dispute in order to coerce Canada into annexation, and had plumed itself upon having had "the good fortune to discover and expose the knavish acts of this past master of duplicity."

freedom, British traditions, imperial prestige. For himself, he concluded, "A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die. With my utmost strength, with my last breath, will I oppose the 'veiled treason' which attempts, by sordid means and mercenary prof-fers, to lure our people from their allegiance."

Laurier's answering manifesto marked the restraint and dignity of the man. He attacked the sudden dissolution in face of the definite pledge of the last session, noted that in his statement Macdonald had not a word to say of his own alleged reciprocity negotiations, and arraigned the N. P. which had now brought to the work-man half-time and lowered wages and to the farmer steadily falling prices of land. The charge that unre-stricted reciprocity would mean discrimination against England meant little in the mouths of men who had built tariff walls high against English goods; he would not admit that discrimination was involved, since assimilation of tariffs was not essential; but if the interests of Canada and of the mother country clashed, he would stand by his native land. Should the concessions demanded from the people of Canada exceed what their honour or their duty, either to themselves or their motherland, could sanction, they would not have reciprocity at such a price, but it was preposterous to reject the proposal in advance. Talk of veiled treason was an unworthy appeal to passion and prejudice. Retrenchment would bridge any gaps in taxation. Economic reform must come first; for the rest, the Liberal party stood for adherence to the spirit of the constitution, provincial

autonomy, and good-will between all races, all creeds, and all classes in the land.

From these long-range exchanges, the party leaders came to closer grips. Macdonald did not spare his failing strength in the depths of a Canadian February. His lieutenants composed their quarrels; Tupper, brought back from England, Thompson and McCarthy, Langevin and Chapleau, Foster and Colby and Haggart, sunk their rivalries against a common danger. The Liberals, disconcerted at first by the government's reciprocity tactics and handicapped by the reiterated charges of disloyalty, fought hard against their defamers. Laurier gave his nights and days to Quebec. In Ontario, Cartwright was a host, and Mills, Charlton, Mulock, Edgar, Landerkin, Sutherland, gave and sought no quarter. Mowat spoke scornfully of the loyalty that trade would endanger, and Mackenzie, now only a wraith of the past, came forward to support his party's cause. In the Maritime provinces, there was no federal Liberal leader to meet Tupper's sledge-hammer or Foster's rapier thrusts. But it was not the activity of the Conservative speakers that gave the Liberals most concern. They faced an organized and aggressive campaign by the business interests which considered themselves in peril. Manufacturers fearful of an open market, wholesalers picturing New York and Chicago capturing their trade, bankers linked with both, worked quietly and effectively in town and city. Most effective of all the anti-reciprocity forces was the Canadian Pacific. Van



SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD  
Prime Minister of Canada, 1867-73, 1878-91  
(1890)





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Horne, in letters to the Montreal "Witness," put the case against unrestricted reciprocity more forcefully than any other critic had done. But the company's action was not confined to argument in the public press. Whether or not the "C. P. R. crowd" did "shell out" as liberally or rather as "Conservatively" as Pope had prophesied, certainly all the influence of a great organization which ramified into every corner of the Dominion, the prestige of its directors, the votes of its employees, passes for absentee voters, were exerted without stint. The Grand Trunk threw its influence into the opposite scale, but it lacked the weight and force of its younger rival.

When at last the contest ended, the government was found to have been sustained. But it had lost heavily. In Ontario and in Quebec the Liberals had made large gains, particularly in the rural districts, and in the two central provinces they had a majority of one. The Maritime provinces and the West saved the day for the government. Only, as the "Globe" declared, "in the new territories where the voters look to the government for daily bread, in Manitoba where the C. P. R. crushed and strangled public sentiment, and in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick where a hungry people succumbed to the coarse and blatant prodigality of Tupper," or, as Cartwright put it more pithily in one of the biting phases he coined with fatal facility, only in "the shreds and patches" of the Dominion, had the government's desperate appeal won any success.

What was particularly significant, it was a majority

secured for the most part from the domains of the Canadian Pacific. In every constituency but one—that of Marquette, where Robert Watson won a six-vote victory, wholly through oversight, Van Horne declared,—through which the main line of the Canadian Pacific ran, a Conservative was elected. The relation between business and politics had never been displayed more clearly. The flag had been waved. Thousands of simple Canadians had imagined that the country's national existence and national honour were at stake, and had voted to avert the dangers of too intimate trade connection with the United States and the risk of diverting Canadian traffic to American railways. Now the country was safe, Macdonald once more had his majority, and those who had directed the puppets from behind the scenes were free to resume their task of pouring millions of British sovereigns into projects for the extension of Canadian roads—into the United States.

In a momentous postscript to the campaign, Edward Blake took his farewell of Canadian politics, and turned the defeat of the party he once had led into a rout. He was not in harmony with the new fiscal policy of the party, not the least so because it had been adopted in his absence and at Cartwright's instance. He had planned to speak against it in public, when the sudden announcement of a general election faced him with a difficult choice. Little as he trusted the new policy of the Liberals, he was still less enamoured, after a dozen years of observation, with the old policy of the

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Conservatives. The announcement of plans for a convention of Ontario Liberals, made in Laurier's name and at Cartwright's suggestion, without any consultation with Blake, irritated the old leader further. He, too, prepared his manifesto, and sent it to the Liberal convention in his old riding of West Durham, with a covering letter announcing his decision not to be again a candidate. The convention officers succeeded in preventing the memorial reaching the meeting, and the editor of the "Globe," to which a copy was sent, induced Blake to withhold publication until Laurier could be consulted. Finally, in an interview with Laurier immediately after his return from New York, Blake agreed to stay his hand until after the election. The day after the polling, the memorial, in an amended version, appeared in the "Globe." It was an extraordinary document. It began with a scathing indictment of the Conservative policy:

It has left us with a small population, a scanty immigration, and a North-West empty still; with enormous additions to our public debt and yearly charge, an extravagant system of expenditure, and an unjust and oppressive tariff . . . and with unfriendly relations and frowning tariff walls ever more and more estranging us from the mighty English-speaking nation to the south, our neighbours and relations, with whom we ought to be, as it was promised that we should be, living in generous amity and liberal intercourse. Worse, far worse! It has left us with lowered standards of public virtue and a death-like apathy in public opinion; with racial, religious and provincial animosities rather inflamed than soothed; with a subservient parliament, an autocratic executive, debauched constituencies, and corrupted and corrupting classes; with

lessened self-reliance and increased dependence on the public chest and on legislative aids, and possessed withal by a boastful jingo spirit far enough removed from true manliness, loudly proclaiming unreal conditions and exaggerated sentiments, while actual facts and genuine opinions are suppressed. It has left us with our hands tied, our future compromised, and in such a plight that, whether we stand or move, we must run some risks which else we might either have declined or encountered with greater promise of success.

What policy was now possible? The fiscal plan he would have preferred, a moderate tariff with restricted reciprocity with the United States, was no longer feasible. An imperial *Zollverein* was beyond the realm of practical politics. Unrestricted reciprocity was not feasible, as distinguished from commercial union; true, a permanent and unrestricted free trade with the United States would bring immense material prosperity, but revenue necessities—for direct taxes were out of the question—and the necessity of a definite adjustment of policy would make inevitable the assimilation of tariffs and pooling of receipts. Commercial union then, was feasible, but it would inevitably make for political union; the community of interest, the intermingling of population, the coming of prosperity, and the fear of its loss, the isolation from Britain, would all drive Canada in that direction. He concluded:

Whatever you or I think on that head, whether we like or dislike, believe or disbelieve in political union, must we not agree that the subject is one of great moment, toward the practical settlement of which we should take no serious step without reflection, or in ignorance of what we are doing? Assuming that absolute free trade, best described as com-

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mercial union, may and ought to come, I believe that it can and should come only as an incident or at any rate as a well understood precursor of political union, for which indeed we should be able to make better terms before than after the surrender of our commercial independence. Then so believing—believing that the decision of the trade question involves that of the constitutional issue for which you are unprepared and with which you do not even conceive yourselves to be dealing—how can I properly recommend you now to decide on commercial union?

A weighty, an oracular utterance, but what did the oracle mean? As to the past, it condemned Tory policy root and branch, but the past was past. As to the present, it condemned Liberal policy as vague, undigested, leading inevitably through commercial to political union with the United States. Elections being fought in the present, the manifesto proved infinitely more damaging to the Liberal than to the Conservative cause. In the series of by-elections which followed the unseating of members as a result of election trials, the Liberals lost heavily, and nothing so hurt their chances as this condemnation by their old leader. As to the future, the letter was not without ambiguity, but it seemed to advocate political union as Canada's eventual destiny. When the letter was so interpreted by the "Globe," and criticized for that reason, Blake added a note much briefer than his original letter, but equally mysterious: "I crave space to say that I think political union with the States, though becoming our probable, is by no means our ideal, or as yet our inevitable future."

The West Durham letter ended Blake's connection with the Liberal party. Cartwright never spoke to him again. Laurier, taking the break less personally, and understanding more nearly the subtleties and hidden workings of Blake's mind, yet could not forgive the blow. A quarter-century later he still spoke feelingly of the letter as "a stab in the back." Blake's objections to the Liberal policy were strained and hypothetical: actual experience would have proved, as a robust practical sense might have anticipated, their futility. The letter to his mind demonstrated Blake's chief weaknesses as a party leader—his inability to work with and through men of many and varying minds, and his lack of political courage.

Henceforth the paths of the two men diverged. Blake entered a fresh field, accepting an invitation from Ireland to enter the British House of Commons in the interest of Home Rule. Here his efforts were vain: British pride, party manœuvres, Irish factions, blocked the path of the solution he urged with irrefutable but unavailing logic, and prepared the way for the tragedies of later years. He had a place of much distinction at the bar, but in the general work of the House he made no special mark; an Irish Nationalist member was in parliament, not of it, and in any case disappointment had sapped his energy. He opposed the aggressive policy which led to the South African War, but here again he spoke in vain: the tide of imperialist reaction which marked the nineties had not yet turned. In these later years his friendship with

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Laurier revived; it never became intimate as of old, but time brought healing to the hurts of pride and the older man took cordial pleasure in the growth and achievement of the successor whose full powers he had been first to discern. In his old seat, Laurier faced calumny and defeat with courage and confidence, biding his time.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BREAK-UP OF THE ADMINISTRATION

The Death of Sir John Macdonald—Rival Heirs and a Compromise—A Scandal Year—Thompson in Power—The Manitoba School Question—Courts and Cabinets—A Government in Difficulties—Laurier in Torres Vedras—The Nest of Traitors—The Remedial Bill and an Episcopal Mandate—The Six Months Hoist—The Tupper Ministry—The Elections of 1896—Quebec Stands by Laurier.

**T**HE rejoicings of the Conservative party over the victory of “the old man, the old flag, and the old policy” had scarcely ceased when they turned to apprehensions that the days of “the grand old man” were numbered. Sir John Macdonald had taxed his waning strength in the hard-fought winter struggle. When the first session of the new parliament opened at the end of April, 1891, both leaders were stricken with illness. Mr. Laurier soon recovered, but Sir John could not rally. He suffered a paralytic stroke on May 29, and a week later the end came.

Party struggles were halted in the shadow of this calamity. Canada had lost her greatest son, the Conservatives an invincible leader, the Liberals a foeman they could not but respect and a compatriot of whom they could not but be proud. Mr. Laurier, who never concealed his belief that Sir John Macdonald had been more responsible than any other man for lowering the level of political contest in Canada and for making



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his countrymen accept success as covering a multitude of political sins, yet had a deep admiration for the loyal Canadian spirit that guided all his policy, and an appreciation, such as only a man of something the same qualities could attain, of the magic mastery Macdonald wielded over men.<sup>1</sup> In joining Sir Hector Langevin and Mr. Nicholas Flood Davin in paying the tribute of the House of Commons to Sir John, Mr. Laurier's eloquence rose to heights of simple directness and deep sincerity:

The place of Sir John A. Macdonald in this country was so large and so absorbing that it is almost impossible to conceive that the politics of this country—the fate of this country—will continue without him. His loss overwhelms us. For my part, I say, with all truth, his loss overwhelms me, and that it also overwhelms this parliament, as if indeed one of the institutions of the land had given way. Sir John

<sup>1</sup> In private conversation many years afterwards Sir Wilfrid observed: "Sir John Macdonald was the supreme student of human nature. That was the secret of his power. I doubt if any man of his century was his equal in the art of managing men. He could play on the strength and weakness of each and all his followers at his will. That was his chief interest. He had imagination, he had a deep and responsible interest in Canada's welfare, but he did not usually take long views. He was always careful to bring his vision back to the next step. Of course, he was a master of strategy, but not in the detached objective fashion of the bloodless chess-player or the general twenty miles behind the trenches; it was his instinctive, sympathetic reading of the men in the *mêlée* about him that made him sense the way out and turned the game. Perhaps his chief disservice was to make his countrymen feel that politics was not only a game but a game without rules. He was our greatest Canadian, but he did more than any other man to lower the level of Canadian public life.

"Macdonald was never interested in the details of administration. What is less realized, he was not a very good speaker. The matter rarely rose above commonplace, he stammered and repeated himself. Yet he usually drove his point home, he had a remarkable memory and an unflinching fund of humour; he knew precisely how to embarrass his opponents and delight the benches behind him. In writing it was another matter. His state papers, such as you will find in Pope's 'Memoirs,' are on a very high plane, admirable work, none better anywhere."

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A. Macdonald now belongs to the ages, and it can be said with certainty that the career which has just been closed is one of the most remarkable careers of this century. It would be premature at this time to attempt to divine or anticipate what will be the final judgment of history upon him, but there were in his career and in his life features so prominent and so conspicuous that already they shine with a glory which time cannot alter. These characteristics appear before the House at the present time such as they will appear to the end in history.

I think it can be asserted that for the supreme art of governing men Sir John Macdonald was gifted as few men in any land or in any age were gifted—gifted with the most high of all qualities—qualities which would have shone in any theatre, and which would have shone all the more conspicuously the larger the theatre. The fact that he could congregate together elements the most heterogeneous and blend them in one compact party, and to the end of his life kept them steadily under his hand, is perhaps altogether unprecedented. The fact that during all these years he maintained unimpaired, not only the confidence, but the devotion—the ardent devotion—the affection of his party, is evidence that, besides these higher qualities of statesmanship to which we were the daily witnesses, he was also endowed with this inner, subtle, undefinable characteristic of soul that wins and keeps the hearts of men.

As to his statesmanship, it is written in the history of Canada. It may be said without any exaggeration whatever, that the life of Sir John Macdonald, from the date he entered parliament, is the history of Canada, for he was connected and associated with all the events, all the facts, all the developments, which brought Canada from the position Canada then occupied—the position of two small provinces, having nothing in common but the common allegiance, and united by a bond of paper, and united by nothing else—to the present state of development which Canada has reached. Although my political views compel me to say that, in my judgment, his

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actions were not always the best that could have been taken in the interest of Canada, although my conscience compels me to say that of late he has imputed to his opponents motives which I must say in my heart he has misconceived, yet, I am only too glad here to sink these differences, and to remember only the great services he has performed for his country—to remember that his actions displayed unbounded fertility of resource, a high level of intellectual conception, and, above all, a far-reaching vision beyond the event of the day, and still higher, permeating the whole, a broad patriotism, a devotion to Canada's welfare, Canada's advancement, and Canada's glory.

The life of a statesman is always an arduous one, and very often it is an ungrateful one; more often than otherwise his actions do not mature until he is in his grave. Not so, however, in the case of Sir John Macdonald; his has been a singularly fortunate one. His reverses were few and of short duration. He was fond of power, and in my judgment, if I may say so, that was the turning point of his history. He was fond of power and he never made any secret of it. Many times we have heard him avow it on the floor of this parliament, and his ambition in this respect was gratified, as perhaps no other man's ambition ever was. In my judgment even the career of William Pitt can hardly compare with that of Sir John Macdonald in this respect, for although William Pitt, moving in a higher sphere, had to deal with problems greater than ours, yet I doubt if in the management of a party William Pitt had to contend with difficulties equal to those that Sir John Macdonald had to contend with. In his death too, he seems to have been singularly happy. Twenty years ago I was told by one who at that time was a close personal and political friend of Sir John Macdonald, that in the intimacy of his domestic circles he was fond of repeating that his end would be as the end of Lord Chatham—that he would be carried away from the floor of parliament to die. How true his vision into the future was we now know, for we saw him at the last, with enfeebled health and declining

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strength, struggling on the floor of Parliament until, the hand of fate upon him, he was carried to his home to die.

With the death of Macdonald the Conservative administration began to fall to pieces. It was only his prestige and his power over men that had held so many diverse elements so long together and had postponed the decay that besets every party in power. There was no clear certainty as to the Conservative leadership. Sir Charles Tupper had been the strongest force in the party, but he had been shelved as high commissioner in London and many of his old colleagues hesitated to bow again to his masterful ways.<sup>1</sup> Sir Hector

<sup>1</sup>At a banquet in Halifax in February, 1896, Sir Charles made public the following characteristic letter, written to his son, Charles Hibbert, in 1891, from Vienna, where he was attending a postal conference, as "evidence that the position of Prime Minister of Canada was not the object of my ambition."

"Vienna, June 4, 1891.

"MY DEAR SON:

"I, as you know, have always felt the deepest personal attachment for our great leader, Sir John A. Macdonald, but I myself did not know how much I loved him until on my arrival here last Saturday I learned that he was struck down by illness. The news was then reassuring and I attended the dinner at the Hofburg Palace with the Emperor and a King, at four o'clock, but refused the invitation of the Minister for the theatre that evening and all invitations since. It now seems there is no hope; how mysterious are the ways of Providence! Never in his long and useful life have his invaluable services been so important to Canada and to the Empire, and God alone knows what the consequences to both may be.

"I received your telegram stating that there was a disposition in certain quarters that Sir John Thompson should succeed him, with great satisfaction and a strong sense of personal relief. You know I told you long ago, and repeated to you when last in Ottawa, that nothing could induce me to accept the position in case the Premiership became vacant. I told you that Sir John looked up wearily from his papers and said to me: 'I wish to God you were in my place,' and that I answered him, 'Thank God I am not.' He afterwards, well knowing my determination, said he thought Thompson, as matters now stood, was the only available man. Of course he had in mind the charges that were made against Langevin, and still pending. Had it been otherwise, and I had been in

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Langevin was the leader of the Quebec wing of the party and the senior privy councillor, and had long been considered by Sir John himself the logical successor, but he was under the cloud of the Tarte charges of corruption and was hampered by the jealousy of Chapleau and Caron. Sir John Thompson stood head and shoulders above his colleagues in ability, solidity of character, and integrity of purpose, but the prejudice which was felt among Ontario Conservatives against a leader who was not only a Roman Catholic but a convert from Protestantism made it appear inexpedient for him to accept the tender which was made to him. D'Alton McCarthy, long Sir John Macdonald's right hand man in Ontario, his chief adviser in constitutional issues, and unquestionably the most effective and most popular speaker in the Conservative ranks, was championed by many friends. In an interview with Thompson, McCarthy insisted upon his own claims to the leadership. But the objection to

Parliament, I would have given him my support, as you well know.

"When this terrible blow came, I naturally dreaded that my old colleagues and the party for whom I had done so much, might unite in asking me to take the leadership, and I felt that in that case a serious responsibility would rest upon me. Believing, as I do, that compliance would have involved a material shortening of the few years at the most remaining to me, you can imagine, my dear son, the relief with which I learned that I was absolved from any such responsibility and able to assure your dear mother that all danger was past. . . . I need not tell you how glad I will be if our mutual friend Thompson should be the man. His great ability, high legal attainments, forensic powers, and above all his personal character all render his choice one of which our party and country should be proud. . . .

"Your loving father,  
"CHARLES TUPPER."

a fiery anti-Catholic crusader was as strong as the objection to a convert from Protestantism, and Thompson, when summoned by the governor-general, had at least the satisfaction of recommending another name, that of the government leader in the Senate, Hon. John Abbott. In his own frank words before the Senate, Mr. Abbott explained how he had come to be chosen:

The position which I to-night have the honour to occupy, and which is far beyond any hopes or aspirations I ever had, and, I am free to confess, beyond any merits I have, has come to me probably very much in the nature of compromise. I am here very much because I am not particularly obnoxious to anybody, something like the principle on which it is reported some men are selected as candidates for the Presidency of the United States . . . that they are harmless and have not made any enemies.

Mr. Abbott had never taken any share in the public work of the party. He had no liking for parliamentary debate, and he loathed and avoided public campaigning. But he was personally popular, a man of dignity and imperturbable courtesy; in Ottawa and Montreal he was intimately known to the people who counted, and behind the scenes his shrewd, cautious counsel had long stood both the Conservative party and the Canadian Pacific Railway in good stead. The choice, if somewhat unexpected, and certainly unsought on Mr. Abbott's part, was therefore a logical if obviously only a temporary solution of the difficulty. The new premier continued to lead in the Senate. In the House of Commons Sir Hector Langevin at first

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remained nominally the government spokesman, but he soon faded into retirement, and Sir John Thompson stood out as the leader of the House and the real force in the administration.

Mr. Abbott succeeded to a troubled heritage. The Conservative party was plainly losing its grip on the country. The dissensions of its leaders and the threat of further cleavage over race and religious issues weakened its force in parliament. More serious for the moment were the revelations of wide-spread corruption and inefficiency in the federal administration.

The parliamentary session of 1891 was "the scandal year." Israel Tarte had sought and won a seat in Quebec, pledged to probe to the bottom the graft in the Public Works Department. He lost no time in making his charges and demanding a committee of inquiry. The Committee on Privileges and Elections began an inquiry which lasted from May until September. It was soon made clear beyond dispute that the department was rotten through and through; that confidential data were divulged to contractors, tenders manipulated at their will, and bogus claims allowed; that Thomas McGreevy was mainly instrumental in procuring these favours for firms with which he and his brother Robert were secretly connected; and that part of the graft went to the party's funds. As to Sir Hector's complicity, the committee differed. The majority report, signed by Sir John Thompson, D. Girouard, and Michael Adams, admitted the guilt of the contractor and of McGreevy, but cleared the minister of any knowledge

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or responsibility. David Mills and L. H. Davies, in a minority report, contended that Langevin, with whom McGreevy made his home in Ottawa, connived at and furthered the frauds, and that his newspaper organ, "Le Monde," was largely sustained from the proceeds. The majority report was upheld on a party vote, D'Alton McCarthy, Colonel O'Brien, and Nicholas Flood Davin alone voting against their party. On the motion of Sir John Thompson, Thomas McGreevy was expelled from the House.

Nor did the charges or the probing end here. In department after department—the Interior, the Public Works, the Printing Bureau—very easy-going standards of honesty were shown to prevail; accommodating clerks found cheques, bronze dogs, dinner-tables, jewels for their wives, come their way, and merchants delivered one set of wares to clerks' homes and sent bills for another set to the government treasury. The Liberals were not content with small game. Members of parliament who had sold offices for cash, ministers who were alleged to keep damsels on the pay-roll who gave no public service, were bitterly attacked. Not all the charges were probed, not all were proved, but sufficient stood to shock the Canadian public, and invite the pitying scorn of other lands.

In answer, the Conservative leaders minimized the revelations, waved the flag, and shouted, "You're another." In August, while the Tarte charges were still under consideration, evidence of equally scandalous cor-



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ruption in the Liberal administration of Quebec came as a godsend. In hearings before the Railway Committee of the Senate, it was brought out that the contractor for the Baie des Chaleurs Railway had been paid large sums by the Quebec government for which no service was rendered, that out of these sums he had paid Ernest Pacaud, editor of "L'Electeur," \$100,000, and that Pacaud had used a large part of this sum to pay political debts of the provincial Liberal party. The Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, Hon. A. R. Angers, at once appointed Judges Jetté, Baby, and Davidson a royal commission to investigate the charges. The illness of Judge Jetté delayed his report, but his fellow-commissioners made an interim report on December 15, holding that Charles Langelier, provincial secretary, and Premier Mercier, while not consulted, had benefited by the payment by Pacaud of notes given for political debts which they with others had endorsed. In November, a Quebec contractor, John P. Whelan, published charges that he had been bled by Mr. Mercier and his friends for heavy campaign contributions out of the swollen profits of the building of the Quebec Court House. On December 16, Governor Angers, who had been a member of the De Boucherville ministry dismissed by Governor Letellier in 1878, now in his turn dismissed Honoré Mercier from office and called the same Senator De Boucherville to form a ministry. The legislature was at once dissolved and elections set for March 8. Judge Jetté's report exonerated Mercier

from any knowledge or responsibility in the Chaleurs affair.

To Wilfrid Laurier the Quebec revelations were a crushing blow. It was not merely that his party was compromised and the force of the attack on the federal government weakened, but the whole country was besmirched, politics made to appear a game in which honesty was at a discount, and friendships shattered. In a public meeting in Quebec in January he attacked Governor Angers' action in dismissing the ministry as arbitrary and unconstitutional. He added that he had not come to defend Mr. Mercier's policy; he considered the Baie des Chaleurs transaction in the highest degree indefensible, yet he would point out that the charges that Mr. Mercier knew of the fraudulent division of the proceeds or benefited thereby had not been established; he was loath to believe them true, and trusted that Mr. Mercier and his friends would succeed in clearing themselves.

In a letter to H. Beaugrand, the radical editor of the chief Liberal journal in Montreal, "La Patrie," Mr. Laurier comments on the affair:

*Wilfrid Laurier to H. Beaugrand.—(Translation)*

Ottawa, August 17, 1891.

MY DEAR BEAUGRAND:

I have just seen our friend Brodeur and am writing you at once. This unfortunate affair in Quebec is making us lose the fruit of our work here. We cannot expect now to make any serious breaches in the ranks of the majority. We shall con-

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tinue to expose the scandals we have begun to throw light on as far as we can, and that done, we shall have nothing to do but close the session.

The most urgent matter now is to know what attitude to take. My opinion would be this: It must be admitted that very serious accusations have been established before the Committee of the Senate up to a certain point, but the accusers, though they touch individuals, do not implicate Mr. Mercier's government. Moreover, not only is the method of investigation unconstitutional, but the investigation itself has no foundation. It is the result of sentiment so obviously partisan that those who are accused cannot expect to secure justice from such a tribunal. In fact, the Senate has not even authority any longer to make this investigation; the bill which would have given it jurisdiction has been withdrawn, and it is only by artifice that the Senate continues to sit.

This position would be very strong, but unfortunately the facts revealed before the Senate have such an appearance that the public, at least in certain quarters, would hardly be disposed to accept any constitutional argument. It would be necessary to go on to say that, while taking account of the revelations which have been made before the Committee of the Senate, in consideration of the evidently partisan character of the inquiry, the public should wait before forming a definite judgment until an inquiry can be made before a more impartial tribunal.

That, my dear Beaugrand, is the attitude that I would take in your paper. Naturally, after that we must await events.

I would be glad to have your own opinion on all this, if you would be good enough to write me a line.

Tell me whether there is not some fatality pursuing our party; it is just at the moment that we are showing up the full extent of the corruption of the Conservative party that a similar revelation comes upon ourselves.

Believe me as always,

Yours very sincerely,

WILFRID LAURIER.

By some of Mercier's friends, Laurier's attitude was considered unduly cool and aloof. Were not both men Liberals; had not Mercier contributed materially to the growing strength of the federal Liberal party in Quebec; were not the party's fortunes linked with his? Granted, but in the Liberal party there were many shades. Aside from annoyance at the untimely revelations, there was a more permanent divergence, rooted in differences of tactics and of temperament. Both men were courageous fighters, both enjoyed the game of politics, but Laurier never threw himself into the hurly-burly of political warfare with the zest and abandon of Mercier; he was not as much at home in the detailed organization of election campaigns and the manipulation of personal alliances. The difference between Laurier and Mercier was the difference between Dorion and Cartier, the difference between the studious, austere, moderate, parliamentary leader, interested in persons but thinking in terms of principles and constitutions, and the burly, slashing popular leader, careless of constitutional issues, exuberant, convivial, delighting in the managing and dominating of men.

When polling came, the electors of Quebec pronounced against the Mercier administration by sweeping majorities. Honoré Mercier at once resigned his leadership and his seat. The federal Liberal party not only lost one of its provincial buttresses, but had to suffer the double share of obloquy which falls upon the righteous when they err; the charges made against Lan-

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gevin and the government at Ottawa came back with interest. In the by-elections which were held in 1892, following the unseating of members for violations of the Corrupt Practices Act, the electors, seemingly convinced that one party was as bad as another, and still under the influence of Blake's post-election attack upon the Liberal trade policy, went strongly with the government. Waverers in parliament returned to the fold. A Conservative majority of twenty-odd mounted steadily to sixty; it seemed that the party had once more found itself.

The session of 1892 varied scandals with gerrymanders. Mr. J. D. Edgar charged that Sir Adolphe Caron, the postmaster-general, had been instrumental in procuring large government subsidies for the Quebec and Lake St. John Railway, and had milked the company to procure election funds. He demanded an inquiry by the same committee which had investigated the Langevin charges. Sir John Thompson refused an inquiry on the grounds that it would involve the impossible task of reviewing the conduct of elections in twenty-two Quebec constituencies during several general elections. Eventually certain charges other than those concerning elections were referred to a judicial commission. Mr. Edgar declared that the charges submitted to the commission were not his, and declined to take part in the investigation; the findings were inconclusive.

The census of 1891 had revealed an astonishingly

slow growth in population the preceding ten years. A bare half-million had been added.<sup>1</sup> The Liberal contention that the government's fiscal policy had failed and that the country was being bled white by emigration to the United States, received startling confirmation, and protection began to lose ground. A more immediate result was the redistribution of seats in accordance with the new population returns and the old party exigencies. Sir John Thompson introduced a measure re-drawing the electoral map in every province. The proposed changes were attacked as gross gerrymandering. Mr. Laurier, going to the root of the matter, urged that redistribution should be taken up by a committee of both parties, as the only means of avoiding evil and the appearance of evil. Thompson denounced the proposal as unprecedented and impracticable, and carried the proposals through. Eleven years later, with power as well as reason on his side, Laurier was to perform this unprecedented and impossible task and to end—for a time—the loading of the electoral dice.

Sir John Abbott (a Queen's Birthday honour), was now finding it impossible to retain power longer. Experience had not lessened his distaste for ministerial life, and the illness which was to carry him off within a year was crippling his powers. In any case his premiership had served its purpose in enabling the party to pull itself together and in demonstrating beyond dispute which of

11871,	3,686,000
1881,	4,324,000
1891,	4,829,000

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the many claimants had best right to Macdonald's mantle. He resigned on November 25, 1892.

Sir John Thompson was at once summoned to form a ministry. He announced the new government on December 6, 1892. It contained few surprises. Sir John remained Minister of Justice, Mr. Foster, Minister of Finance, and Sir Charles Tupper's brilliant son, Charles Hibbert, Minister of Marine and Fisheries. Hon. A. R. Angers exchanged his lieutenant-governorship for Mr. Chapleau's place in the cabinet. Sir Adolphe Caron and Alderic Ouimet, Mackenzie Bowell, John Haggart, and John H. Costigan and others of the old guard remained. Sir Frank Smith and Sir John Carling held cabinet place without portfolio. An interesting innovation came through the appointment of two comptrollers of Customs and Inland Revenue and a solicitor-general as members of the ministry but not of the cabinet; the choice for the former of these posts of Clarke Wallace, the head of the Orange Order in Canada, balanced the accession to power, in the "Mail's" phrase, of "a political confederate of the order of Father Petre."

Sir John Thompson had rightly won his place. The prejudices against his creed had been overborne in all but a few extremist quarters. The whole country had come to recognize his power of intellect, his unswerving integrity, his sound Canadianism. True, his earlier reputation for judicial impartiality had not survived the strain of party battle; his calm exterior hid strong ambitions and intense party feelings which sometimes

burned their way through in a revealing flash, but this revelation only strengthened him in party circles.<sup>1</sup> He had little ease of manner or popular appeal, but he gave an impression of dependable solidity which greatly comforted his followers and won public confidence.

The most serious task which faced the new premier was the settlement of the Manitoba school question. Already this issue had been in federal politics for more than two years. It was fated to bedevil public life for all the remaining years of Conservative power.

The Manitoba school question was an echo of the storms which had raged over Riel and the Jesuits' Estates. The torch of racial and religious passion had been carried from the banks of the Saskatchewan to the banks of the St. Lawrence; now eager messengers

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Cartwright was one of the men most successful in drawing Thompson's fire. Sir Richard himself spared no man; to quote a random instance, at a campaign meeting in Kingston, during a by-election in January, 1892, he had greeted the local Conservative candidate as a fitting choice—"as straightforward as Sir John Thompson, no more likely to eat his own words than Mr. Foster, as honest as Mr. Chapleau, as little likely to use his position to forward his own interests as Mr. Dewdney, as moral as Haggart, as modest as Tupper, Senior and Junior, and as loyal as J. J. C. Abbott." A few months later, in the House of Commons, he had denounced government boodling and patronage, judicial partiality, and public apathy. Whereupon Thompson thanked Cartwright for another of "those war, famine and pestilence speeches which have so often carried the country for the government," proposed a subsidy to keep him in parliament for the Conservative party's sake, replied to a taunt as to defending criminals by declaring that he had never shrunk from taking any man's case, no matter how desperate it might be, for the purpose of saying for him what he might lawfully say for himself, but had sometimes spurned the fee of a blatant scoundrel who denounced everybody else in the world and was himself the most truculent savage of them all, and ended by thanking God nature had broken the mould when she cast Sir Richard. This descent from "the language of Parliament to the invective of Billingsgate," as Mr. Laurier termed it in reply, was the last touch needed to establish Sir John's right to party leadership.



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carried it once more westward to the Red River. As might be surmised, it was not really an educational question: rarely is the public roused to a lively interest in the genuine problems of education. The school was merely the arena where religious gladiators displayed their powers, an occasion for stirring the religious convictions and religious prejudices of thousands and of demonstrating how little either their education or their religion had done to make them tolerant citizens.

In the modern state, where the school makes the man, the control of the school system has been held vital to all who wish to impress their stamp upon the rising generation, and so education enters politics. In Canada the question had a special interest and a special difficulty. Confederation had been a compromise, an endeavour to assure freedom to each section of the people to follow their own bent, as well as unity in matters of common interest. No part of the Confederation compact was more characteristic or more indispensable in ensuring its acceptance than the provisions which safeguarded the educational privileges of religious minorities. In the case of New Brunswick, the provisions had been found to be too narrowly drawn to protect the Roman Catholic minority. They had been the basis, secure and unquestioned, of the rights accorded the Protestant minority in Quebec. They had ensured continued acceptance of the compromise of the sixties according separate school rights to the Roman Catholic minority in Ontario. Now in the case of Mani-

toba, child alike of Ontario and Quebec, the clause and the people were to be given their real testing.

In the days of the Hudson's Bay Company there had been little provision for schooling in the Red River district. Such schools as existed were provided by religious denominations, Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, with varying grants from the company. When Manitoba entered the union and an organized government took the place of the happy-go-lucky paternalism of the company, it became necessary to consider the basis of a future school system. The white and half-breed population of the province was evenly divided between Protestant and Catholic, and while it was probable that new settlers would come from Ontario rather than from Quebec, it was not yet certain. It was to the interest of both parties to ensure protection for the minority. The limitation of provincial powers as to education in the interests of religious minorities had been a fundamental feature of the Confederation compact. In any case the fresh and bitter controversy over the school question in New Brunswick had made Ottawa aware of the need of clear and definite provision in the case of the new province. The settlers themselves had not been greatly concerned over the question, but Father Ritchot, one of the three delegates from the Red River, had the interests of his church very close at heart throughout the negotiations. The result was the inclusion in the Manitoba Act of a clause intended to safeguard denominational schools.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clause 22, The Manitoba Act:

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In its first session the provincial legislature had established a school system modeled on that of Quebec. The lieutenant-governor in council was empowered to appoint a board of education, composed half of Protestant and half of Catholic members, with a superintendent of Protestant and a superintendent of Catholic schools. The whole board had the power to organize the schools and select the books to be used. The provincial grant was to be divided evenly between the Protestant and Catholic schools. An amendment in 1875 increased the board to twenty-one members, twelve Protestants and nine Roman Catholics, and provided for the division of the provisional grant in proportion to the number of children of school age. The denominational character of the system was increased by a provision in the same year to the effect that the establishment of a school district of one denomination should not prevent the establishment of a school district of the other denomination in the same place.

In and for the Province the said Legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to education, subject and according to the following provisions:

(1). Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law or practice in the Province at the Union.

(2). An appeal shall lie to the Governor-General in Council from any Act or decision of the Legislature of the Province, or of any provincial authority, affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education.

(3). In case any such provincial law as from time to time seems to the Governor-General in Council requisite for the due execution of the provisions of this section is not made, or in case any decision of the Governor-General in Council or any appeal under this section is not duly executed by the proper Provincial authority in that behalf, then, and in every such case, and as far only as the circumstances of each case may require, the Parliament of Canada may make remedial laws for the due execution of the provisions of this section, and of any decision of the Governor-General in Council under this section.

It was soon apparent that Manitoba was to be overwhelmingly Protestant and English-speaking. It was not surprising that from time to time murmurs arose against a system which gave the Roman Catholic Church a special and powerful function. In 1874 Mr. W. F. Luxton was elected to the legislature on a platform calling for abolition of separate schools, and resolutions were introduced to that effect in the legislature in the two sessions following. When, however, in 1876 the government had proposed to abolish the upper house or legislative council, the French-speaking members, who looked upon it, with all its faults, as a possible guardian of minority privileges against rash change, were solemnly assured by representative English-speaking leaders that they would not suffer if the council fell. There the matter rested for a dozen years. In January of 1888 a momentous election was fought in the Manitoba constituency of St. François Xavier. The Norquay government, weakened by corruption, had been patched up under Dr. Harrison's premiership, but it was staggering under the criticisms and exposures of the Liberal press and Opposition speakers. The Provincial Secretary, Joseph Burke—in spite of his name a French-Canadian—was seeking re-election in his home constituency; his Liberal opponent was an English-speaking Presbyterian; the constituency was overwhelmingly French and Catholic. Wide-spread public distrust of the administration was forcing many desertions from the Conservative cause. As a last resort the party organizers spread the rumour, based on Lib-

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eral criticisms of the waste involved in printing public documents in French, that the Liberals planned to interfere with the schools and the language of French-speaking Catholics. To these assertions the Liberals gave the strongest and most solemn denial. Mr. Joseph Martin, the moving spirit of the Liberal party, with Mr. James Fisher, President of the Liberal Provincial Association, on the platform beside him, gave positive pledges not to interfere with these institutions. The Liberals won. Four days later Dr. Harrison gave up the fight and Mr. Greenway was called upon to form a new government. Before selecting his cabinet, Mr. Greenway called upon Archbishop Taché and gave assurances that the Catholic schools and the French language would remain inviolate and received the endorsement of the archbishop for Mr. Prendergast as an acceptable Catholic member of the cabinet. In the election that followed Mr. Greenway received the support of five out of six French-Canadian constituencies.

Thus matters stood when D'Alton McCarthy, fresh from the equal-rights agitation in the East, carried the torch to the Western heather. He addressed a cheering audience at Portage la Prairie, urged them "to make this a British country in fact and in name," told them "that the poor sleepy Protestant minority of Ontario and Quebec were at last awake," and pointed to the separate school question in Manitoba and the North-West and the French-school question of Ontario as local tasks which could and should be done first before the more difficult problems where vested interests were

stronger could be settled.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Joseph Martin, speaking from the same platform, intimated that changes in both the language and the school question were under consideration. The government, as afterward appeared, had virtually decided to bring both systems of schools under a responsible minister, and to establish uniform provisions for the training and testing of teachers. It was not their purpose to abolish separate schools, but rather to lessen the excessive measure of ecclesiastical control which marked both Protestant and Catholic schools—in other words, to change from the Quebec system, under which the State merely gave its blessing and its tax-gathering machinery to the two sets of denominational authorities which controlled the schools, to the Ontario system, wherein the State assumed control, but with permission to Catholics or Protestants to establish schools within the general framework, in which special religious teaching could be provided. Mr. Martin, with the impetuosity which marked all his actions, determined to go further than either his colleagues or Mr. McCarthy had proposed,—namely, to solve the religious difficulty by doing away with all religious teaching, even of an undenominational kind. Mr. Greenway did not conceal the fact that this programme of Mr. Martin's was both unauthorized and

<sup>1</sup> D'Alton McCarthy, in a speech in Ottawa in 1889 after his return from Manitoba declared: "Do you tell me that the Equal Rights Association had nothing to do with that question? Of course the feeling was there; the grievance existed. Her people's minds had only to be directed to it, and the moment attention was drawn to it, the province of Manitoba rose as one man and said, we want no dual language and away with separate schools as well."

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unwelcome, but he had not the strength of his impetuous lieutenant, and could not stand against the fires of passion which had been lighted.

Mr. Martin prepared his bill, but soon found that he had promised more than he could perform. Manitoba was not prepared to accept wholly secular schools. The Protestant majority could be stirred to protest against the unreasonable amount of an unreasonable religion taught in the Roman Catholic schools, but not so with regard to the reasonable amount of a reasonable religion taught in their own schools. The protest of a chorus of Protestant divines forced Mr. Martin to drop his secular proposal, though they did not change his convictions. The government programme, thanks to Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Martin, was then diverted into a proposal for abolishing the denominational schools and setting up a single system with provision for a mild amount of undenominational religious teaching in all the schools.

The opponents of denominational schools did not at first object to the manner in which they were conducted. In all the years that had passed there had been no official complaint of inefficiency, never a hint that any improvement of Catholic or Protestant schools was to be desired. Mr. Martin, in introducing his bill, declared that the government's action had not been determined because they were dissatisfied with the manner in which the affairs of the department had been conducted, but because they were dissatisfied with the system itself. Denominational schools meant a country divided

against itself, ecclesiastical privilege, the recognition of a state church. To this the Roman Catholic reply, and the reply of not a few Anglicans, was that religion was not a matter that could be kept in one of the seven compartments of the week, a matter foreign to the life and thought of every day, but a vital and essential factor in the training of every child and in the study of every subject whereon men differed in opinion; denominational schools did not mean recognition of a state church but recognition of the rights of the parent. Many who disliked separate schools, distrusted ecclesiastical control, and feared national division, yet felt that they were in honour bound to accept the system as part of the necessary compromise of Confederation. The broad assurance of protection to minorities given in the British North America Act itself, the assurances of men like Brown and Mackenzie that against their will they had accepted separate schools as a necessary and permanent part of the price paid for nationality and for peace, the undoubted intention of the Manitoba Act of 1870, the pledges of Conservative leaders in 1876, and the still more solemn pledges of Liberal leaders in 1888,—these were not bonds to be lightly broken.

As the discussion developed, the critics of separate schools attacked incidents in their working. In a sparsely settled province like Manitoba, with vast areas of reserved lands, it was difficult at the best to build up a single school system; it would be impossible to build up two efficient systems, to find support for two schools, in the same scattered areas; nor could Ger-



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man Mennonite, nor Icelandic Lutheran, nor Polish Catholic logically be denied the right which French Catholics claimed. A single system of non-sectarian schools was the only alternative to chaos and Babel. Nor were the Catholic schools adequate. They had been catechism schools, their teachers poorly trained, their pupils sent out into the world illiterate. To which the defenders of the old system replied that the complaint as to duplication of systems was purely hypothetical. Out of some ninety Catholic school organizations, only four were in mixed communities too small to support both schools effectively; a great majority lay in the solid French-Canadian parishes along the Red River, or in the larger towns where each flock was of large numbers. As to efficiency, granted all was not as it should have been, but were all Protestant schools efficient? Could any pioneer school be judged by Eastern standards? Could not defects have been remedied and standards raised by discussion, instead of this sudden and arrogant suppression of the very right to exist?

Unfortunately, no attempt was made to bring about reform by consent, to ensure increased efficiency without riding roughshod over the minority's convictions and the majority's pledges. Between the Quebec or Manitoba system, with its complete surrender of school control to denominations, and the United States system of uniform and exclusive state control, some compromise might have been found, as had originally been contemplated, on the Ontario model, with its state control of

administration and of standards and its grant of freedom to minorities to organize schools within this framework in which a special religious point of view could be given. But in the mood of the province, nothing but root-and-branch revolution would suffice. The acts which passed the Manitoba legislature in March, 1890, abolished all denominational control. The dual board of education was swept away and a system of public non-sectarian schools established, supported by local assessment upon all the taxable property within the district and by legislative grants, and supervised by a provincial department of education. Non-denominational religious exercises were to be prescribed by an advisory board and held in schools, at the option of the local trustees, before the closing-hour, any children being privileged to withdraw at their parent's request.

The Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba had been overwhelmed by the sudden assault upon privileges they had held safe beyond dispute. They found themselves forced to choose between accepting schools which were virtually continuations of the old Protestant denominational schools or shouldering the double burden of paying their share of taxes to the public school and the cost of maintaining parochial schools of their own, or seeking to have the provincial legislation overthrown. They were weak in numbers and weak in wealth, but their ecclesiastical leaders were determined and persistent. At once the long campaign against the school laws of 1890 was begun.

The Roman Catholic members in the legislature had

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fought against the school laws, but their votes had been overwhelmed. Archbishop Taché had appealed to the lieutenant-governor to withhold his assent, but had appealed in vain. Three other means of redress were possible: the federal government might disallow the act, the courts might declare it unconstitutional, or the federal parliament might enact remedial legislation.

Disallowance of provincial statutes was a rusty blunderbuss which the Ottawa administration was loath to fire. It had already sought to use it against Manitoba in the dispute over railway charters and the recoil had been shattering. It had lately refused to use it against Mercier's Jesuits' Estates measure; it could not use it against Martin's school measure. Within the year allowed for the federal veto the general election of 1891 intervened. Either to grant or to refuse a petition for disallowance would be awkward. Mr. Chapleau entered into negotiations with Mgr. Taché, and convinced him that the other remedies would be more efficacious and would, if need be, be applied. The cabinet adopted in April, 1891, the recommendation of the minister of justice, Sir John Thompson, to let the acts take their course; if the courts declared them *ultra vires*, the minority would be satisfied; if not, their petition for redress could then be considered.

Next, the courts. Had Manitoba the power to pass these measures? Not if they affected prejudicially any privilege regarding denominational schools which any class of persons enjoyed by law or practice in 1870. In November, 1890, in the name of a Catholic rate-payer,

of Winnipeg, D. Barrett, application was made to Mr. Justice Killam to quash the by-laws based upon the statutes. The application was dismissed. An appeal was taken to the full Court of Queen's Bench, but again, with Justice Dubuc dissenting, the statutes were upheld. Appeal was next taken to the Supreme Court of Canada. In October, 1891, that court unanimously held the acts *ultra vires*, substantially on the ground that while Roman Catholics were not forbidden by the acts of 1890 to maintain denominational schools, yet the obligation to pay taxes in support of public schools was a very real handicap upon any such endeavour, and therefore prejudicially affected the right. Still one more appeal was possible. In July, 1892, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council reversed the Supreme Court's finding: the only rights which any class of persons held in 1870 was the right to establish and pay for schools in accordance with their religious tenets: these rights the Roman Catholics still enjoyed: the existence of denominational schools did not necessarily imply immunity from taxation for the support of other schools: if this was a hardship, not the law but the religious convictions which made it impossible for the minority to accept the law, were responsible. Thus the Privy Council, in a decision which appears strained today: it was not the mere existence of denominational schools that was guaranteed, but their existence free from prejudicial impediments, such as the Supreme Court reasonably held taxation to be; while as to the quibble about Catholic convictions and not the Mani-

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toba law being at fault, it was plainly these very convictions, whether right or wrong, that the constitution aimed to protect.

Disallowance had been refused. The endeavour to have the statutes declared unconstitutional had failed. One resource remained,—the appeal to the governor-general in council. Granting that no rights which existed at the time of union had been affected, had not rights or privileges which had been established after the union been taken away, and did not this warrant remedial action by the federal authorities? This was the question Sir John Thompson had promised in 1891 to consider if the court decision went against the minority. Now, late in 1892, the minority, in petition, demanded this redress. Ontario and Western opinion urged the government to accept the Privy Council's opinion as final: the courts had held no grievance existed, so why remedy it? Why open a healing wound? Thus beset, the government decided to move, but to move warily and with an air of judicial dignity and impartiality. "If the contention of the petitioners be correct, that such an appeal can be sustained, the inquiry will be rather of a judicial than a political character," declared a subcommittee of the cabinet in December, 1892. As the event proved, it would have been more judicious to be less judicial.

In January, 1893, the cabinet—or rather Her Majesty's Privy Council for Canada—held a public hearing to determine whether or not they had the right and duty to intervene. Mr. J. S. Ewart presented the minority

case; Manitoba declined to be represented. After considering Mr. Ewart's arguments, the cabinet, instead of deciding, determined to ask the courts to express an opinion as to whether or not they had power to act. A stated case was prepared and argued before the Supreme Court in October. In February, 1894, the court gave judgment. Every one of the five judges rendered a separate decision; the diversity of point of view and the hair-splitting refining of logic did not show the court at its best. Two judges, Justice King and Justice Fournier, held that both the Manitoba and the British North America Act applied; that the privileges granted after the union were protected by these acts, and that since these rights had undoubtedly been affected, the federal authorities had the power and the duty to intervene. The majority, Justices Ritchie, Gwynne, and Taschereau, by diverse paths reached a different conclusion: only the Manitoba Act applied; in this act the rights safeguarded by the appeal to the governor-general in council are not explicitly stated to be those arising after the union and must therefore be taken to be those existing at the union; the Privy Council had held that the latter rights had not been affected prejudicially; therefore no appeal could be. From this majority judgment of the Supreme Court, the question was carried to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England, but before its verdict could be received much had happened in Canada.

Many members of parliament would have been content to let the courts wrestle with the question for the

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rest of their political lives. Not all. Tarte, demanding immediate remedy of the minority's grievances, and McCarthy, opposing any further consideration of their plea, could both support the resolution which Tarte moved in March, 1893, in vague terms condemning the government's policy, and more especially attacking it for assuming to act in a judicial capacity and thus evading ministerial responsibility. In supporting the amendment Mr. Laurier declared that Tarte and McCarthy, who had nothing in common but courage and convictions, naturally found themselves opposed to a government which had neither. He showed in an admirable historical review that the original clauses protecting minority rights had been inserted at the demand of the Quebec Protestants, voiced through A. T. Galt. If the Catholic majority in Quebec abolished the Protestant separate schools, not a man in the House could deny that the federal government should intervene. What of Manitoba? It was contended that the Manitoba public schools were non-sectarian; it was replied they were really the old Protestant schools thinly disguised. What were the facts?

If it is true . . . that under the guise of public schools, Protestant schools are being continued, and that Roman Catholics are forced, under the law, to attend what are in reality Protestant schools, I say this, and let my words be heard by friend and foe, let them be published in the press throughout the length of the land, that the strongest case has been made for interference by this government. If that statement be true, though my life as a political man should

be ended forever, what I say now I shall be prepared to repeat, and would repeat on every platform in Ontario, every platform in Manitoba, nay, every Orange lodge throughout the land, that the Catholic minority has been subjected to a most infamous tyranny.

What were the facts? Why did not the government investigate, and make up its mind, instead of seeking the subterfuge of judicial appeals? The prime minister had declared that the members of the council could deal with the matter as judges, "regardless of the personal views which Your Excellency's advisers may hold with regard to denominational schools." "How convenient that doctrine," Mr. Laurier continued, "which permits the advisers of His Excellency to pocket at once their opinions and their emoluments." The government's fumbling and delay were permitting passions to rise to fever heat and making settlement in any direction almost impossible to carry through. The resolution was defeated on a party vote, save for a bolt by McCarthy and his fellow-stalwart Colonel O'Brien. Further discussion awaited the slow passing of the test case through the courts.

Other issues divided attention. The prolonged industrial depression of the early nineties and the persistence of racial controversies led to wide-spread discontent with old parties and old policies, and with Canada's political status. Party lines wavered: Ontario farmers, suffering from low prices and organized as Patrons of Industry, on United States granger models, went into politics, chiefly to Mowat's hurt;



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Tarte joined the Liberal forces, and McCarthy, at odds with his party on the school question and on the tariff, left the Conservative ranks, or was read out by the "Empire," though he did not join his old foes. The rooted faith in a protective-tariff policy faded. Stagnating trade, the steady drain of emigration, the growth of combines, made it appear that protection had failed to bring the promised prosperity. The Liberals shifted the emphasis upon reciprocity to a straight attack on high tariffs; farmers' organizations demanded radical change; the McCarthy group insisted that protection had been given its chance and had failed; Thompson was compelled to promise at least to "lop the mouldering branches away," and the budget of 1894 brought some substantial reductions of duty. Discontent found other channels. Annexationist sentiment was more widely prevalent than ever before or since: Ontario border towns, and not least Toronto, were honeycombed with avowed or secret advocates of union with the United States. The counter propaganda of imperial federation lost something of its force when its supporters faced concrete facts, but imperial sentiment continued to flow in other channels, notably in the demand for fiscal preference. The holding of a colonial conference in Ottawa in the summer of 1894, attended by representatives of the Australasian colonies, the Cape, and Canada, as well as by an observer from Britain, led to renewed emphasis upon tariff preference and Pacific cables as the most practicable bonds of imperial union.

In these shifting times Mr. Laurier strove without ceasing to catch the tide of public favour for his party. Every year after 1891 he made a speaking tour through Ontario; in Quebec he was never given rest; more rarely he visited the provinces by the sea. In 1894 for the first time he went West, finding, himself, a new vision of what Canada might be, and planting in many Western communities where hitherto it had scarcely been respectable to be a Liberal, an enthusiasm which grew with the years. East and West, his hold on the country strengthened. Men and women who had read his speeches with detached interest, became devoted admirers when they heard him face to face, and lifelong friends with the warm hand-shake and the kindly quizzical word and the frank and courtly smile that followed.

The culminating effort in the popular campaign of these years was the National Liberal Convention held at Ottawa in June, 1893. Based on a suggestion of the Toronto "Globe," this first Dominion-wide gathering of delegates of a great party proved an extraordinary success. The convention revealed the personal assets the party possessed in Laurier, Mowat, Fielding. It linked up the local organizations. It gave an opportunity of framing a fighting platform, in which the demand for lower tariffs and reciprocity with the United States was emphasized. It impressed the country and heartened the rank and file of the party.

While the Liberal party was gaining in unity and confidence, the Conservatives were again rent with doubt and dissension. They, and the country with

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them, suffered a severe blow in the sudden death of Sir John Thompson in December, 1894, while on a visit to Windsor Castle. There was no man of his force to follow. The premiership went by seniority to Mackenzie Bowell, government leader in the Senate, and particularly available as a successor to a Catholic leader because of his own position as a past Grand Master in the Orange Order. Mr. Bowell was a politician of long if somewhat humdrum experience; he was widely liked and respected, but he had little distinction, and lacked the adroitness and the strength necessary to make his cabinet, nervous and quarrelsome in the shadow of the coming crisis, work together in loyal endeavour.

Mackenzie Bowell was scarcely in office when in January, 1895, the finding of the Privy Council on the Manitoba minority's right of appeal compelled the government at last to determine a policy on the school issue. The Privy Council, in an opinion which revealed more care and more power than its earlier judgment, reversed the Supreme Court's finding. It was held that only the Manitoba Act applied; that the sub-section of the Manitoba Act providing for the appeal to the federal government was a substantive enactment, not merely a concurrent means of protecting the rights which existed at the union; that the rights or privileges covered by the appeal were "any rights," including therefore any conferred by legislation after the union; that these latter rights had undoubtedly been affected since the minority might now be compelled to pay a

double school levy; and that accordingly the governor-general in council had jurisdiction. Their Lordships concluded, in a dictum which perhaps was not strictly called for:

The particular course to be followed must be determined by the authorities to whom it has been committed by the statute. . . . It is certainly not essential that the statutes repealed by the Act of 1890 should be re-enacted. . . . The system of education embodied in the acts of 1890 no doubt commends itself to, and adequately supplies the wants of the great majority of the inhabitants of the province. All legitimate grounds of complaint would be removed if that system were supplemented by provisions which would remove the grievance upon which the appeal is founded and were modified so far as might be necessary to give effect to these provisions.

It was now beyond doubt that the minority had a right to appeal to the government for redress. It was for the government to decide whether it was possible and expedient to afford a remedy, and if so, what form the remedy should take. The majority in the cabinet had already made up their minds: a grievance existed and a remedy must be found. But in order to make this course more palatable to their Protestant followers, they continued to seek to make it appear that they were carrying out a legal duty, not a discretionary policy. To this end they interpreted the Privy Council's opinion as a mandate, a constitutional obligation which could not be evaded. To this end they once more, in March, formed themselves into a court and heard Mr. Ewart and Mr. McCarthy once more debate. On March 21, an order in council which revealed in its

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imperious note the hand of its chief draughtsman, the young Minister of Justice, was issued, couched in stiff and legal language, reciting the Privy Council's judgment, and declaring it essential that the province should pass legislation supplementary to the existing system of education and restoring to the minority the rights of which it had been deprived, at peril, as an accompanying minute declared, of divesting itself permanently of control over education and bringing about the establishment of an educational system in the province which no legislative body in Canada could alter or repeal. The minority must be given the right to maintain Roman Catholic schools as before 1890, the right to share in public provincial grants, and the right of exemption from payment for the support of any other schools.

In June, the Manitoba legislature adopted a memorial drawn up by the provincial government. The old Roman Catholic schools had been inefficient; it was difficult at best to ensure an efficient system in a sparsely settled country: it would be hopeless with resources scattered among Catholic and Anglican and Mennonite schools. The federal government should make a full and careful investigation of the facts before coming to a conclusion. Meanwhile Manitoba could not accept the responsibility of acting as Ottawa directed.

The government hesitated on the brink of coercion. A remedial bill now? Next session? Next parliament? Never? Now, insisted the three Quebec members,

Angers, Ouimet, and Caron, in July, and when their colleagues would not agree, went on strike. Angers, stiff, principled, and not set on office, definitely resigned; Caron and Ouimet, more pliable, after valiant interviews, and after announcements from Ouimet that he would accept no assurances short of written pledges from each of his colleagues, went weakly back on the promise of legislation in a special session. No Quebec Conservative was found to take Mr. Angers' place. Next parliament, Hibbert Tupper had earlier insisted, better fight on a general order than a specific bill, easier face Manitoba with a fresh than an outworn majority; but his colleagues from Quebec would not run the chance. In dudgeon he resigned, but after a few days' reflection returned to office. Never, insisted thirty-nine Ontario Conservatives in a message through the whips. Next session, the cabinet at last agreed. In their rejoinder to Manitoba they declined to make any inquiry, suggested that provincial legislation somewhat less stringent than outlined in the remedial order might be accepted, and declared that if the Manitoba government failed to make a reasonably satisfactory settlement the Dominion parliament would be called not later than January 2, 1896, to enact a remedial law.

During these passages Mr. Laurier said little. He was taunted with equivocation, lack of conviction, cowardice, but he could not be stung into committing himself for or against a remedial measure before the measure was introduced. The minority, he declared in the House in July, undoubtedly had a right to

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appeal, but it was for the government to decide whether or how to grant a remedy. He sympathized with their desires: "I wish that the minority in Manitoba may be allowed the privilege of teaching in their schools, to their children, their duties to God and man as they understand those duties and as their duties are taught to them by their church." But how was this end to be attained? First, get the facts. From the outset the need had been to find out the facts,—not, as the government had done, to make it a question of law. Then use conciliation: "If that object is to be attained it is not to be attained by imperious dictation nor by administrative coercion. The hand must be firm and the touch must be soft; hitherto the touch has been rude and the hand has been weak." Courage? "My courage is not to make hasty promises and then ignominiously to break them. My courage is to speak softly, but once I have spoken to stand or fall by my words."

In an Ontario tour in the autumn of 1895 Mr. Laurier reiterated this stand. In his opening speech at Morrisburg, on October 8, he was in his happiest vein:

I have expressed an opinion more than once upon this question, but I have not yet expressed the opinion which the ministerial press would like me to express. I am not responsible for that question, but I do not want to shirk it; I want to give you my views, but remember that war has to be waged in a certain way. When the Duke of Wellington was in Portugal, as those of you will remember who have read that part of the history of England, he withdrew at one time within the lines of Torres Vedras, and there for months he remained,

watching the movements of the enemy. . . . Gentlemen, I am within the lines of Torres Vedras. I will get out of them when it suits me and not before.

Mr. Laurier went on to emphasize the need of investigation before action.

The government, instead of investigating the subject, proceeded to render—what shall I call it?—an order in council they called it, commanding Manitoba in most violent language to do a certain thing, to restore the schools or they would see the consequences. Manitoba answered as I suppose every man approached as the government of Manitoba was approached, would answer; Manitoba answered it by saying, “We will not be coerced.” I ask you now, would it not have been more fair, more just, more equitable, more statesmanlike, at once to investigate the subject, and to bring the parties together to hear them, to have the facts brought out so as to see whether a case had been made out for interference or not? That is the position I have taken in the province of Quebec. That is the position I take in the province of Ontario. I have never wavered from that position.

Recalling Æsop’s fable of the failure of the blustering wind as contrasted with the success of the melting sun in compelling the traveller to take off his coat, Mr. Laurier continued:

Well, sir, the government are very windy. They have blown and raged and threatened and the more they have raged and blown, the more that man Greenway has stuck to his coat. If it were in my power, I would try the sunny way. I would approach this man Greenway with the sunny way of patriotism, asking him to be just and to be fair, asking him to be generous to the minority, in order that we may have peace among all the creeds and races which it has pleased God to bring upon this corner of our common country.





Sir J. J. C. Abbott, 1891-2



Sir John Thompson, 1892-4



Sir Mackenzie Bowell, 1894-6



Sir Charles Tupper, 1896

FOUR CONSERVATIVE PRIME MINISTERS



## THE BREAK-UP OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Do you not believe that there is more to be gained by appealing to the heart and soul of men rather than by trying to compel them to do a thing?

The government is not very anxious to have my opinion as a rule. When they gerrymandered Canada in 1882 they did not consult any of the Liberals. When they passed the franchise act they did not consult any of the Liberals. But upon this question they want to consult me and to have my views. Here they have them. Let them act upon them and we will be in accord; but more than that I will not do. I will not say that I will support the policy of Sir Mackenzie Bowell until I know what that policy is, and then when we have it in black and white it will be time for me to speak upon it. Let the ministerial press abuse me all they can. I stand within the lines of Torres Vedras and I will not come out until I choose my time.

In December the crisis deepened. Not even Grover Cleveland's blustering Venezuela message, deeply felt and deeply resented though it was, could divert public interest from the Ottawa scene. The Greenway government, fresh from a general election in which it had been overwhelmingly sustained, definitely refused to re-establish any form of separate schools and again proposed a commission of inquiry. Clarke Wallace resigned from the Bowell government when it became clear that it intended to force a drastic measure through. He resigned on December 14. On December 15, Sir Charles Tupper cabled from London to the prime minister an innocent suggestion that in view of important developments in cable and steamship projects, it might be well if the prime minister would invite him to Ottawa for conference, and Mr. Bowell, too guile-

less or too proud to question, acquiesced. Then two days after parliament met in its special and unprecedented sixth session, on January 2, and after the Speech from the Throne sanctioned by the whole cabinet had been delivered, the country and even hardened parliamentarians were startled by the resignation of seven members of the cabinet—George E. Foster, A. R. Dickey, W. H. Montague, J. G. Haggart, W. B. Ives, J. F. Wood, and Sir C. H. Tupper. The bolters declared, through Mr. Foster, that they did not resign because of any difference of principle but because of loss of confidence in their chief's capacity. In spite of this denial, it was charged that the seven bolters—all Protestants—were opposed to proceeding further with the Remedial Bill. The fact seemed to be that the bolters had realized how perilous a task they faced in attempting to carry a measure of coercion, and were unwilling to face it unless under a leader of dogged and aggressive courage whose close association with Sir John Macdonald and the past glories of the party would make it possible to rekindle party loyalty and revive party discipline, or else under a leader younger than either Bowell or Tupper. Doubtless personal ambitions and jealousies played their accustomed part. Bowell retorted that for months he had been living in a "nest of traitors." He strove hard to patch up a new cabinet, but the strikers picketed every train and every hotel where a potential minister was to be found, and blocked his efforts. The strikers suddenly became apprehensive that the governor-general might send for the

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leader of the Opposition. For various reasons,—“seven in all,” declared Dr. Landarkin, “five loaves and two small fishes”—they agreed to return. A truce was patched up, with the general understanding that Bowell was to continue for the session, and that Sir Charles Tupper should then succeed and go to the country. Sir Charles resigned his high commissionership and became secretary of state and a little later leader of the House of Commons; Sir Hibbert did not re-enter the cabinet, but took the post of solicitor-general, just outside the gate. It was an extraordinary episode: whatever hidden provocation may have existed, the public were shocked by the indecent publicity of the attacks on the prime minister and the party shaken by the display of jealousy and bad judgment on the part of its leaders. A particularly bad taste was left by a subsidiary row between Montague and Caron, in which charges of anonymous letter-writing and treacherous intrigue were brought against the new recruit. Out of it all, only Mackenzie Bowell himself—perhaps no heaven-born leader, but an honourable and straightforward gentleman—emerged with any credit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speaking in the Senate, nine years later, in March, 1905, when another ministerial crisis was in full swing, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, in replying to incorrect versions of the episode, made it plain that time had not cooled his indignation. References to “Baron Munchansen,” “chicanery,” “brazen treachery,” “poisonous reptiles warmed in my bosom,” enlivened his statement. He declared that Mr. Foster, supported by Mr. Haggart, holding other views as to who should succeed, had opposed Sir Charles Tupper’s return, but had later fallen in with the plans of their fellow-conspirators, regarding the arrangement as only temporary; that the bolters planned to go to the country before passing a Remedial Bill, and that he made no bargain with Sir Charles Tupper to retire at the end of the session, though he had his mind made up as to his course of action.

The government was doing its best to commit suicide, but it was hard to kill. With the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the Orange Order and the manufacturers behind it, and the memory of Macdonald still a power to conjure with, they could have afforded to make many a blunder, had they not had to face a leader as able in strategy as Macdonald himself, fast attaining Macdonald's height of confidence and affection, and standing out in clean, clear contrast with the cabinet's display of petty intrigues and panic-stricken indecision. Much would depend upon Laurier's tactics when the Remedial Bill was introduced. If he accepted it, the government was safe in Ontario, except for whatever minor inroads the McCarthyites might make, and would receive the reward of priority and courage in Quebec. If he compromised, or urged delay or a commission of inquiry, the impatient certainty of partisans everywhere and the weary prayer of the unconcerned to make an end of the troubling question might be relied upon to ensure for him and his party the fate of the over-judicious.

The House had met on January 2. Not until five weeks later did Mr. Dickey move the first reading of the Remedial Bill, and outline its provisions. The bill provided for the establishment of a system of separate schools in Manitoba, supervised by a Roman Catholic board of education, supported by the local rates of such Catholics as did not declare themselves public-school supporters, with exemption from public-school local rates, and entitled to receive whatever provincial grant

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the legislature might allot; the bill, while declaring such a grant a right and privilege of the minority, would not, as the remedial order had done, specifically command the province to make it.

Laurier heard the formal announcement with deep relief. The government had manœuvred itself into an impossible position. Its bill offered the maximum of coercion against the province, with the minimum of real aid for the minority. Without a provincial grant the rural separate schools could not maintain their efficiency or their existence. He was therefore free to maintain the old Liberal position of provincial rights, "Hands off Manitoba," and when his political and ecclesiastical foes attacked him in Quebec as a traitor to his race and his religion, as attack they would, he could reply that the sham relief the bill offered would not serve the minority's interest half so well as the voluntary concessions he would secure from the Manitoba government by his sunny ways.

The church authorities did not delay in making their position clear. Archbishop Langevin telegraphed from St. Boniface: "*Lex applicabilis, efficax et satisfactoria. Probo illam. Omnes episcopi et veri Catholici approbare debeunt. Vita in lege.*" In words more easily understood by the elector, in a fiery address at Montreal he declared: "When the hierarchy has spoken it is useless for any Catholic to say the contrary, for if he does he is no longer a Catholic." In a letter to "L'Évènement" the Abbé Paquet, speaking for Archbishop Bégin, declared that the Church would support and insist

upon the remedial law.<sup>1</sup> But much more striking than any of these utterances was the pronouncement issued in the name of the bishops by Father Lacombe, a pioneer Western missionary whom all men honoured. In an open letter to Wilfrid Laurier written January 20, and made public through ecclesiastical channels a month later, he issued the episcopal ultimatum:

*Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, M. P., Ottawa.*

MY DEAR SIR:

In this critical time for the question of the Manitoba schools, permit an aged missionary, to-day representing the bishops of your country in this cause, which concerns us all, permit me to appeal to your faith, to your patriotism and to your spirit of justice, to entreat you to accede to our request. It is in the name of our bishops, of the hierarchy and the Catholics of Canada, that we ask the party of which you are the very worthy chief, to assist us in settling this famous question, and to do so by voting with the government on the Remedial Bill. We do not ask you to vote for the government, but for the bill, which will render us our rights, the bill which will be presented to the House in a few days.

I consider, or rather we all consider, that such an act of courage, good-will, and sincerity on your part and from those who follow your policy will be greatly in the interests of your party, especially in the general elections. I must tell you that we cannot accept your commission of enquiry on any account, and shall do our best to fight it.

<sup>1</sup> "The hierarchy alone can hope to produce this union by calling upon our legislators, and especially upon those whose conscience it controls, to rise for a moment above the temporal interests which animate them, to forget their political divisions, and, taking the judgment of the Privy Council of England as their starting point, to make it the solid basis of a truly remedial law. To the ecclesiastical power, then, belongs the right to judge whether the interference should take place in the form of a command or council. . . . And when the interference takes an imperative form, as in the case of the Manitoba schools, only one thing remains to be done by the faithful, and that is to obey."



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If, which may God not grant, you do not believe it to be your duty to accede to our just demands, and if the government, which is anxious to give us the promised law, is beaten and overthrown while keeping firm to the end of the struggle, I inform you, with regret, that the episcopacy, like one man, united with the clergy, will rise to support those who may have fallen in defending us.

Please pardon the frankness which leads me to speak thus. Though I am not your intimate friend, still I may say that we have been on good terms. Always I have deemed you a gentleman, a respectable citizen, and a man well fitted to be at the head of a political party. May Divine Providence keep up your courage and your energy for the good of our common country.

I remain, sincerely and respectfully, honoured Sir,

Your most humble and devoted servant,

A. LACOMBE, O.M.I.

It was with this message still ringing in his ears that Wilfrid Laurier announced the policy of his party when the debate on the second reading of the bill began on March 3. Sir Charles Tupper had moved the second reading in a strong speech which emphasized the protection of minorities as the indispensable condition of Confederation, the foundation, therefore, of all Canada's later greatness: the legal duty laid upon parliament by the decision of the Privy Council, and the moral obligation which honour imposed upon the majority. Mr. Laurier rose to reply. Those who were expecting a dexterous and evasive speech, or at least a call for a commission of inquiry, soon had their hopes or their doubts set at rest. In one remarkable sentence, which makes thirty lines of Hansard, but runs limpidly and

swells with growing force to its smashing end, he made his position clear:

Mr. Speaker, if in a debate of such moment it were not out of place for me to make a personal reference to myself,—a reference, however, which may perhaps be justified, not so much on account of the feelings which may not unnaturally be attributed to me, being of the race and of the creed of which I am, but still more in consideration of the great responsibility which has been placed on my shoulders by the too kind regard of the friends by whom I am surrounded here,—I would say that, in the course of my parliamentary career, during which it has been my duty on more than one occasion to take part in the discussion of those dangerous questions which too often have come before the parliament of Canada, never did I rise, sir, with a greater sense of security; never did I feel so strong in the consciousness of right, as I do now, at this anxious moment; when, in the name of the constitution so outrageously misinterpreted by the government, in the name of peace and harmony in this land; when in the name of the minority which this bill seeks or pretends to help, in the name of this young nation on which so many hopes are centred, I rise to ask this parliament not to proceed any further with this bill.

As the thundering cheers from his followers were hushed, Laurier went on to give in detail the reasons for his stand. Glancing at Tupper's rhetorical appeal to the past triumphs of Confederation, he referred him to one page not so glorious—the page that described how Nova Scotia had been dragooned into union:

There was at the head of the government of Nova Scotia at that time a gentleman who to-day has been brought back from England to force this measure upon the people of Canada. Instead of applying himself to persuading his own fellow-countrymen of the grandeur of this Act of Confederation, he

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forced the project down the throats of the people of Nova Scotia by the brute force of a mechanical majority in a moribund parliament.

Tupper's action had left a bitterness "which never will entirely disappear until it is buried in the grave of the last man of that generation." And what of the agitations which had marked the years since,—the dispute with Ontario over the Streams Bill, the dispute with Manitoba over the railway charters, the dispute with Quebec over the Jesuits' Estates law? Had not one and all of these dangerous strains been caused by attempts "to abridge the independence of the provincial legislature"?

The powers of control over the provinces which the constitution assigned to the Dominion were of doubtful wisdom,—probably never to be applied without friction and discontent. But the remedy of federal interference is there; it must be applied, but so applied as to avoid irritation. It is not to be applied mechanically, it must be applied intelligently, "only after full and ample inquiry into the facts of the case, after all means of conciliation have been exhausted, and only as a last resort." In this case, when the Roman Catholic minority urged its grievances, the federal government should have made inquiry, should have searched out the facts, should have gone to Manitoba, not to the courts. It is said inquiry, negotiation, would be of no avail. Yet the government of Manitoba had expressed its willingness, once the grievances were investigated, the wrongs proved, itself to give the minority redress.

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The province had never been approached in the proper way. The federal government had bungled the case from first to last. He continued:

There are men in this House who are against separate schools, but who would have no objection to the re-establishment of separate schools in Manitoba, provided they were re-established by the province of Manitoba itself. There are men in this House who are not in favour of separate schools, but who think very strongly that it would not be advisable to interfere with the legislation of Manitoba at all until all means of conciliation had been exhausted. Sir, in face of this perilous position, I maintain to-day, and I submit it to the consideration of gentlemen on both sides, that the policy of the Opposition, affirmed since many years, reiterated on more than one occasion, is the only policy which can successfully deal with this question—the only policy which can remedy the grievance of the minority, while at the same time not violently assaulting the right of the majority and thereby perhaps creating a greater wrong. This was the policy which, for my part, I adopted and developed the very first time the question came before this House, and upon this policy to-day I stand once more.

Then turning to the warning given him by Father Lacombe, Mr. Laurier closed his address in a quiet, firm statement of principle which went to the root of things:

Sir, I cannot forget at this moment that the policy which I have advocated and maintained all along has not been favourably received in all quarters. Not many weeks ago I was told from high quarters in the Church to which I belong that unless I supported the school bill which was then being prepared by the government and which we now have before us, I would incur the hostility of a great and powerful body. Sir, this is too grave a phase of this question for me to pass

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over in silence. I have only this to say: even though I have threats held over me, coming, as I am told, from high dignitaries in the Church to which I belong, no word of bitterness shall ever pass my lips as against that Church. I respect it and I love it. Sir, I am not of that school which has long been dominant in France and other countries of continental Europe, which refuses ecclesiastics the right of a voice in public affairs. No, I am a Liberal of the English school. I believe in that school which has all along claimed that it is the privilege of all subjects, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, whether ecclesiastics or laymen, to participate in the administration of public affairs, to discuss, to influence, to persuade, to convince—but which has always denied even to the highest the right to dictate even to the lowest.

I am here representing not Roman Catholics alone but Protestants as well, and I must give an account of my stewardship to all classes. Here am I, a Roman Catholic of French extraction, entrusted by the confidence of the men who sit around me with great and important duties under our constitutional system of government. I am here the acknowledged leader of a great party, composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, as Protestants must be in the majority in every party in Canada. Am I to be told, I, occupying such a position, that I am to be dictated the course I am to take in this House, by reasons that can appeal to the consciences of my fellow-Catholic members, but which do not appeal as well to the consciences of my Protestant colleagues? No. So long as I have a seat in this House, so long as I occupy the position I do now, whenever it shall become my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I will take not upon grounds of Roman Catholicism, not upon grounds of Protestantism, but upon grounds which can appeal to the conscience of all men, irrespective of their particular faith, upon grounds which can be occupied by all men who love justice, freedom and toleration.

So far as this bill is concerned, I have given you my views. I know, I acknowledge, that there is in this government the

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power to interfere, there is in this parliament the power to interfere; but that power should not be exercised until all the facts bearing upon the case have been investigated and all means of conciliation exhausted. Holding these opinions, I move that the bill be not now read the second time but that it be read the second time this day six months.

Laurier's speech was not long; it was characteristically limited to driving home a few outstanding points, but it was a speech that made history. Its breadth and sureness, its courage and fervour, roused the admiration and the enthusiasm of the Opposition to unusual heights. The demand for the six-months' hoist, the most direct negative parliamentary procedure provided, challenged the government's policy boldly and unequivocally.

The debate continued for over a fortnight. All the debating power of the House was brought into action. For the government, A. R. Dickey insisted that the bill was a constitutional necessity and that if it was not to be passed, the clause protecting minorities was waste paper; Sir Adolphe Caron, Sir Hector Langevin, and Colonel Amyot urged Quebec's example of tolerance and the countless pledges of public men; Ives spoke for the Quebec Protestant minority; and, in particularly effective speeches, Hibbert Tupper reviewed the legal and the personal phases, George Foster the political phases, and Sir Donald Smith the pledges given the people of Red River in 1870. For the Liberals, C. A. Geoffrion, Louis Lavergne, François Langelier attacked the bill as ineffective in its aid to the minority; Joseph Martin, John Charlton, J. D. Edgar, George

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Casey, David Mills, the latter with some hesitancy on constitutional points, attacked its assault on provincial liberties and its impossibility as a permanent settlement. There was no small measure of cross-firing, Wallace, McCarthy, and their Ontario followers siding with the Opposition, and such Liberals as Devlin and Beausoleil declaring they would vote for the bill. When the vote on Mr. Laurier's six-months' hoist was taken at six o'clock of the morning of March 20, the government was sustained by a majority of twenty-four, a little more than half its normal margin. Eighteen Conservatives voted against the government,—Wallace, McCarthy, Sproule, O'Brien, McNeill, Cockburn, Henderson, Tyrwhitt, McLean, Calvin, Hodgins, Bennett, Wilson, Stubbs, Rosamond, Carscallen and Craig from Ontario, and Weldon from New Brunswick. Seven Liberals voted with the government,—Angers, Beausoleil, Delisle, Devlin, Fremont, McIsaac, and Vaillincourt. Ontario went five to three against the bill, Quebec broke nearly even, the Maritime provinces three or four to one for it, while from all the West only Joseph Martin's vote went against the measure.

The second reading passed, and the committee stage was entered. But it was already clear that the bill was doomed. The legal term of parliament ran only one month more; it would be extraordinarily difficult for the government to jam the bill through and pass its estimates in that brief space, against a determined Opposition and with its own ranks weakened. The government therefore made a belated attempt at a compro-

mise. Already Sir Donald Smith on his own initiative had sounded out the Manitoba government. Now, three days after the vote, a delegation, consisting of Hon. A. R. Dickey, Minister of Justice, Hon. A. Desjardins, Minister of Militia, and Sir Donald Smith, was sent by the government to Winnipeg to seek a settlement by negotiation. Mr. Laurier was consulted; he wished the mission well, and would interpose no obstacles to its success. Clifford Sifton and J. D. Cameron acted for the province. The atmosphere was not favourable; the earlier hurling of legal thunderbolts, the government's action in pushing the bill through committee, despite a contrary understanding; the knowledge on both sides that the federal government could accept no settlement which the hierarchy would not endorse, made frank discussion difficult. While an earnest attempt was made to find common ground, and while each side made concessions, discussion only made it clear that neither could go far enough to meet the other.

The federal authorities would have been content to forego a distinct system of separate schools provided that within the framework of the public schools a wide measure of autonomy could be granted, including provision for a separate school-house or school-room in every district where there were twenty-five or more Roman Catholic children, Catholic teachers, Catholic representation on the advisory board, Catholic textbooks, and a Catholic normal school for training teachers. The provincial representatives were willing



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to make concessions, in practice, as to representation and text-books, but they objected to the compulsory character of the separation proposed, and the financial burden and the lowering of efficiency it involved. They made two counter offers: either clean-cut secularization or an agreement to limit religious exercises to the last half-hour of the day, when any clergyman or teacher of religion would be allowed to enter the school, in determined order, to give religious training to the children of his special flock. Neither offer was considered, and early in April the conference failed.

Sir Charles Tupper was not the man to give up without further effort. A determined attempt was made to jam the bill through. All other business was suspended. The House sat day and night. Relays of ministers and of back-benchers were organized to hold the fort. The effort was in vain. Tupper met his match. The North of Ireland insurgents in the Conservative ranks, aided by a few Ontario Liberals, blocked progress. It was in vain that Tupper read this man and that out of the party; that only gave a respected New Brunswick stalwart, Richard Weldon, a chance long awaited to tell what he thought of the whole house of Tupper. It was in vain that for a hundred hours the House was held in session; Dr. Sproule read the Nova Scotia school law, John Charlton read the Bible passages prescribed in Ontario schools, Colonel Tyrwhitt went through Mark Twain and Bibaud's History of Canada, always promising to come to the point, and barely a clause went through. And when the gov-

ernment charged obstruction, the impeachment was vigorously denied: had it not been the government which had delayed the bill? "Whose fault was it," added Mr. Laurier, who himself took no part in the obstruction, "that we did not meet until January second, that we found the cabinet divided into two factions, calling each other imbeciles and traitors, and that six weeks of this dying session elapsed before the bill was brought down?"

On April 15 Sir Charles gave up the attempt to pass the bill. The estimates were voted, and on April 23 the sixth session of the seventh parliament of Canada came to a close.

In the breathing space before elections, the government went through the promised reorganization. On May 1 Sir Charles Tupper became prime minister in form as well as fact, and *Bowell* and *Daly* disappeared. The Quebec section was varied, though not greatly strengthened, by the dropping of *Sir A. Caron* and *J. A. Ouimet*, the return of *A. R. Angers*, and the addition of *L. O. Taillon*, head of the provincial ministry, and of *J. J. Ross*, whose Scotch name and French tongue bore witness to the assimilating effect of generations of French mothers; on the whole, with Senator *Desjardins*, one of the framers of the "Programme Catholique," already in the cabinet, a distinctly ultramontane group, well favoured by the clergy. *Chapleau*, influenced by his old friend *Tarte*, resisted all pleas to rejoin, much to the disappointment of Tupper, who had counted on him as the only man who could make

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head against Laurier in Quebec. Less success was met in Ontario. It was in vain that portfolios were offered to William Meredith, to B. B. Osler, to Sir A. Kirkpatrick; Sir Charles had to be content with a solid and respectable rank-and-filer, David Tisdale. The one appointment which showed a touch of imagination was the selection of Sir John Macdonald's son, Hugh John, as Minister of the Interior; it was fervently hoped that his name and his share of his father's genial humour and of his father's features would stand the cabinet in good stead; "the Conservative party," it was prophesied, "will win by a nose."

The campaign was intensely fought. It was in large part a duel between Laurier and Tupper. Each had his strength; each was bitterly attacked in the party strongholds. Sir Charles opened his campaign in Winnipeg itself, and found the good hearing his courage warranted, but in Tory Toronto he met jeers and taunts against the perpetual "I," the "I" who had made Canada, built the party, and now would unite it again. Laurier spoke again and again in Ontario, but the real brunt of the battle there was left to his vigorous band of lieutenants and to the Tory insurgents. An announcement that Sir Oliver Mowat would join the Laurier cabinet gave the cause respectability, though the effect was somewhat spoiled by Sir Oliver's canny reluctance to resign and take his chances in contesting an Ontario seat.

It was in Quebec that Laurier's main fight was waged. There he faced great odds. It was not merely

that the federal and provincial machinery were in opponents' hands, nor that the party treasury was scant.<sup>1</sup> Immensely more serious was the crusade waged by the hierarchy. They more than carried out Father Lacombe's warning. The collective mandement read in all the churches on May 17 was, it is true, comparatively mild and moderate in tone. It declared that while there was no intention to side with any political party, the school question was chiefly a religious question. No Catholic was permitted, let him be journalist, elector, candidate, or member, to have two codes of conduct, one for private and one for public life: "all Catholics should vote only for candidates who will personally and solemnly pledge themselves to vote in parliament in favour of the legislation giving to the Catholics of Manitoba the school laws which were recognized as theirs by the Privy Council of England."

But this mandement, which represented merely the greatest common denominator of episcopacy, was supplemented by much more vigorous utterances, particularly in the eastern part of the province. Mgr. Marois, vicar-general, writing from the Archbishopric of Quebec, dotted the i's by stating that it would be a mortal sin not to obey the bishops, a grave and mortal fault to vote for a Laurier candidate. Mr. Laurier's doughty old opponent, Bishop Laflèche, was more

<sup>1</sup> This lack was sufficient to deter a famous newspaper politician who offered his support if the Liberals would raise a campaign fund of \$20,000 for the Montreal district, to match an equal contribution from himself, and being told that their whole federal fund was little greater, went away sorrowing over such impracticable innocence. Unfortunately, never until twenty years later was the Liberal party again so poor in purse.

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direct. Referring to Laurier's stand in his speech of March 3 he declared:

This is the most categorical affirmation of the Liberalism condemned by the Church which has ever been made to my knowledge in any legislative assembly of our country. The man who speaks thus is a rationalist Liberal. He formulates a doctrine entirely opposed to the Catholic doctrine; that is to say, that a Catholic is not bound to be a Catholic in his public life. . . . Under the circumstances, a Catholic cannot under pain of sinning in a grave matter vote for the chief of a party who has formulated so publicly such an error.

A number of Liberal candidates signed the mandement pledge, but even this flexible conduct availed them little; for double assurance, the weight of the clergy was thrown to their Conservative opponents.

"Choose the bishops or Barrabas Laurier," a curé told his parishioners. The Conservative press denounced the Liberal leader as a traitor to his race and religion. Here and there a priest was found who stood out against the flood; when a priest in Portneuf threatened his flock with the fate of a neighbouring community lately buried under a landslide, if they voted Liberal, the Liberals were able to take them to two priests who promised to administer the last rites of the Church if they fell ill. In Ontario, the bishops made no pronouncement, and so in the Maritime provinces, save for John Cameron, Bishop of Antigonish, who declared after a careful study of the Holy Gospel and the party platforms; "I am officially in a position to declare, and I hereby declare, that it is the plain conscientious duty of every Catholic elector to vote for the Conservative

candidate; and this declaration no Catholic in this diocese, be he priest or layman, has a right to dispute.”

Against these powerful forces, nowhere in the whole world more powerful than in Quebec, Wilfrid Laurier had two distinct assets. One was Israel Tarte's organizing capacity. With all the passion of conviction, all the coolness of cynical experience, all the inconvenient knowledge of a former insider in Conservative ranks, Tarte directed the campaign without a tactical error. But the much more important asset was the pride Laurier's compatriots cherished in Quebec's greatest son. They had come to know him well; in the previous two years alone he had addressed between two and three hundred meetings in Quebec. They were impressed by his distinction, moved by his eloquence, roused by his courage. They could not believe it a mortal sin to make a French-Canadian prime minister. They were loyal sons of the Church, but they were also *Canadiens*, and free men.

The polling on June 23 gave the Liberals decisive victory. In Ontario they carried forty-four seats against forty-one for the government, seven falling to the McCarthyites and Patrons; in the Maritime provinces they came nearly even; in the Territories and British Columbia they broke all precedent by winning six seats out of nine. But it was Manitoba and Quebec which afforded the chief surprise of the election. Manitoba, much less excited during the contest than Ontario, gave four seats out of six to the government which was sup-

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posed to be coercing it. The province on which the government had gambled, the province which was supposed to vote as the bishops nodded, gave sixteen seats to Charles Tupper and the bishops and forty-nine to Wilfrid Laurier.













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